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JUNE 1988, #134

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M A G A Z I N E

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COVER

"Sword of Dawn" is the first DRAGON® Magazine cover by noted illustrator Charles Vess, who said it was the first painting he ever did using a model. The painting was originally made for a magazine that ceased publication before the painting saw print. Apparently, we were luckier.

LETTERS

More last words

Dear Dragon:

I read your article "The Last Word" in issue #129, and I have some suggestions for the article's sequel. They are:

"We don't need to post guards at night. We're too powerful."

"What's that?" "Aw, it was nothin'."

"I ain't afraid of no giants."

"Are those drums I hear?"

"Hey, fellas!" "Shut up, Ernie!" "But guys—"

Cliff Frazier
West Valley UT

Super error found

Dear Dragon:

I was on vacation, two days after the arrival of my author's copy of DRAGON® issue #132. I finished reading the editorial, "Errors," then turned to page 70 to once again admire my article, "A Little Less Super." That's when my own "error" jumped off the page. In the first paragraph, I said, "the DC HEROES game measures power *logarithmically*." I should have said "geometrically" [The game's] AP power levels increase in a 2:1 geometric progression (each AP doubles the power level of the AP preceding it). *Mea culpa*. . .

Jon Slobins
Damascus MD

No need to feel bad about it. We missed it, too.

More errors?

Dear Dragon:

Since in the editorial of issue #132 you talked about errors, I thought I'd point out a couple that I found.

First, on page 68 in "TSR Previews," one of the contributing artist listings reads "the Brothers Hildebrandt." Shouldn't that be "the Hildebrandt Brothers"?

Also, right in the editorial on page 88, the third to the last sentence of the article reads: "The writer proofread his own work. . . ." Shouldn't it say: "The writer proofreads his own

work. . . ."? I wasn't sure if that was intentional or not, so I thought I'd mention it.

Keith Martens
Charlotte MI

As to the first point, it is proper to refer to the team of Greg and Tim Hildebrandt as either "The Brothers Hildebrandt" or "The Hildebrandt Brothers." Both references may be found in the many works on which they have collaborated.

As to the second point, "proofread" (with the "read" pronounced "red") is the past tense of "proofread" (with the "read" pronounced "reed"), and was the appropriate choice, since the incident referred to in the editorial had already occurred. But keep looking!

Letter from the editors

Dear Readers:

As the cover of this issue notes, this is DRAGON® Magazine's twelfth anniversary in print. DRAGON® Magazine started as a little-known gaming periodical and has grown into the largest, most popular, and most widely distributed role-playing game magazine there is. We could not have done it without you, and you have our sincere appreciation.

Sir Isaac Newton once noted in a letter that if he saw farther into the realm of physics than others, "it is by standing upon the shoulders of Giants." The same may be said of our achievements in producing DRAGON® Magazine. We extend our thanks and best wishes to everyone who contributed to this magazine in any part over the years. Many of our writers and former staff members are still active in the field of gaming and publishing. We particularly extend our appreciation to Kim Mohan, who was for so long the cornerstone upon which this magazine's very existence rested.

We've come a long way in twelve years — and we plan to be around for a long time to come. Your comments and support make it all worthwhile.

Thank you!

The editors and staff of
DRAGON Magazine

Equal time

The MPs found her wandering the streets in the 82nd Airborne Division area on post, and she was brought to Womack Army Hospital at Ft. Bragg, N.C., before dawn. I was the emergency tech in the psychiatry and neurology clinic for the day, so I went to the waiting room where she had been sent after her processing. She was in a wheelchair because no one wanted her wandering around the hospital. The MPs said she was saying lots of strange things.

She seemed to be a normal, healthy woman, soft-spoken though extremely childlike. She clutched a giant pink teddy bear that the MP report said she refused to give up. Once in my office, I told her who I was and asked her name.

"Mary," she said. I would have saved myself lots of time by asking her last name then, but I was being conversational. We chatted for a while before she mentioned that she and her husband Joseph were fleeing Egypt, and her son Jesus was still in the ER waiting to be resurrected. I nodded at this piece of news and asked her last name.

"Magdalene," she said with that soft, pleasant voice.

"Oh," I said, and set my notepad aside. We chatted a bit more. Then I had her wait in the office with another tech while I found the civilian psychiatrist in the clinic. We brought her in and talked about life in ancient Rome while we tried to pin down who she really was. She finally mentioned a few names, we checked them out, and two days later she and her bear were returned to her family's custody. I filed the case, and that was that.

In the five years I served as a mental health counselor for the U.S. Army, I talked with a number of people with quite bizarre religious delusions. An ER tech decided to experiment with PCP crossed with strychnine, which was what passed locally for heroin, and was shortly thereafter led down to P&N professing his belief that he was Jesus Christ. A woman on outpatient treatment with a chronic schizophrenic disorder told me of her belief that she had to murder her daughter, who was an angel, because her husband was the Devil. She recalled getting the idea from the Book of Revelation, which I have read several times without getting

(continued on page 55)

Errata for Hotel Reservations 1988 GEN CON®/ORIGINS™ Game Fair

Important information was left out of the 16-page 1988 GEN CON®/ORIGINS™ Game Fair proper hotel confirmation for you; without it, insert in DRAGON® issue #132. The Official hotel reservations cannot be made for you and Housing Application form, used for making your party. We apologize for any inconvenience hotel reservations, is grossly in error. Before you send this particular form to the Housing Bureau, write down your arrival and departure dates in the space above the table listing hotel rates.

Sincerely, Mark Olson
Promotions/Convention Manager

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FORUM

We ask that material submitted to the "Forum" be either clearly and neatly written by hand or typed out with a fresh ribbon and clean keys, in order for us to read and understand your comments. If we cannot read your letter, we cannot use it.

There has been in past issues of DRAGON® Magazine's "Forum" section a tendency to tinker with or modify the workings of the magic-user class. Some maintain that a 1st-level mage is very weak; others believe the class to be fine just as it is. Some suggest altering the memorization rules and number of spells learnable, or giving bonuses on number of spells memorized for high intelligence similar to a cleric's wisdom bonus.

This issue came into current prominence with the letter of W. Brian Barnes in issue #122.

There, he maintains that 1st-level mages are "a one-shot magical item" and severely limited in their options once their one spell is cast. He goes on to criticize the standard argument that game balance requires weak low-level mages to offset powerful high-level wizards. True balance, he argues, should not be dependent on time, but rather should be constant over time. All in all, a very compelling argument. Most players that have played a magic-user at low levels can identify with their relative impotence — low hit points and one spell. After you've cast that one spell, your life can get real boring.

In issue #128, Steve Shewchuk tries to counter this argument by presenting a variety of alternative actions for low-level magic-users. Regrettably, these options are somewhat questionable in their usefulness. Mr. Shewchuk suggests first that magic-users proficient in darts can throw them at opponents. Unfortunately, this ignores a fundamental rule of combat: You never, ever, fire missile weapons into melee combat. I recommend that anyone who questions this conduct a mock fight with friends. As anyone who has been in any kind of fight can tell you, positions change very rapidly, and where an enemy was just a second ago, a friend can appear at any time. So, here you

have a mage, whose combat skills are not anything to boast of in the first place, lobbing darts into a melee. See page 63 of the *Dungeon Masters Guide* for how to handle this. After a few accidental darts in the back, a mage's fighter companions are probably going to tell him to knock it off, perhaps with some force. I would theorize that the spell magic missile was invented to deal with just this problem.

Another disadvantage to the dart idea is that, until 6th level, that dart is a mage's only weapon of proficiency. Despite there being no provision for it in the rules, a mage should have considerable difficulty in engaging in melee combat with a dart. When attacked by an orc with a scimitar, a staff is a whole lot more useful. I would consider a mage (or anyone else for that matter) without a hand-to-hand melee weapon to be easier to hit, perhaps giving an attacker a +1 or +2 bonus "to hit." A bow or crossbow might deflect a sword attack, but a dart? Never.

Another suggestion by Mr. Shewchuk is the extensive use of cantrips. Take a good look at those cantrips for a minute. Most of them have exceptionally limited combat usefulness at best. A *smokepuff* cantrip will make a puff of smoke that will dissipate in one round. A creature should get a saving throw and maybe even a bonus such as +2 if a mage actually tries to throw it so as to blind, or maybe the mage should have to make a "to hit" roll. It strikes me that a puff of smoke could very easily be cleared with a simple puff of breath. Any cantrip that makes noise will almost certainly be overwhelmed by the regular noises (get a shield and beat on it — pretty noisy business) of combat. If one actually does draw a creature's attention to its back, guess what? The group's thief sneaking around back should have to make another roll to see if the monsters notice him. If he is spotted, there goes his back-stabbing which requires surprise. I personally have always found cantrips to be pretty silly — summon a honey bee indeed! They're good for entertaining peasants, but in combat with bloodthirsty monsters, they just don't cut it.

Next, Mr. Shewchuk suggests elven mages use woodsman skills. I find no reference in the

elven or half-elven race descriptions to such abilities. But even if the mage has such skills, being a guide (or even using the elven ability to increase surprise of opponents) generally requires the guide to be near the front of the party, a place a 1st-level mage should avoid like the plague. Those with 1-4 hp cannot even take an average sword blow. And of course this suggestion does nothing for those mages who are human. Finally, Mr. Shewchuk discusses multiclassed mages, which seems to miss the whole point. The discussion was about magic-users, not fighter/magic-users or magic-user/thieves, which are totally different classes with their own problems and circumstances.

Here is a list of my suggestions:

1. If you like cantrips, give magic-users spell capacity for them in addition to that for 1st-level spells, not in exchange for them. Expecting mages to sacrifice a 1st-level spell for four lousy cantrips is going to doom cantrips to disuse. A good number might be two cantrips for every first-level spell a mage can memorize (a 1st-level magic-user would therefore have a first-level spell and two cantrips).

2. Drop the learning rules. A competent DM can control the number of spells the mage receives over time. This way, a low-level mage does not struggle to find *magic missile* — only to have it permanently removed from his use. The learning rules seem somewhat unfair anyway; clerics get instantaneous access to all their first-level spells and wisdom bonuses on top of that.

3. Consider starting magic-user players at 2nd level. It gives them a few more hit points and provides them with an extra spell. Under this interpretation, mages gained a level while in apprentice training. If you think this is unfair to others who have to start at first level, make the mage start with zero experience points — i.e., to reach 3rd level, he must gain 5,001 xp. That way, he has to pay for it all, but is less of a wimp at the very beginning of the campaign.

4. Avoid the spell-bonus system suggested by numerous people. Such a system creates something of an imbalance, effectively raising a mage two or three levels if he has high intelligence (and when was the last time you had a mage character with less than 16 intelligence?). Spell bonuses for clerics are less of an imbalance. A cleric's spells are less flexible and there are fewer of them available — and none of them can do damage at a distance or affect multiple creatures as can magic missile or sleep. A first-level party containing a mage with three *sleep* spells is going to waltz through most low-level encounters. After all, that *sleep* spell was designed to affect just the type and power level of monsters the party will be encountering. One

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*It's not who wins or loses—
It's who lives
or dies...*

YOU CAN BE THE STAINLESS STEEL RAT Harry Harrison

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PSYCHODROME 2: THE SHAPECHANGER SCENARIO Simon Hawke

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changers are real. And they plan to launch a lethal
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other problem with this system: What's good for the goose is good for the gander. Before you players out there start pressing your DMs to use such a system, be warned that the NPC magic-users will have the bonus, too. And your DM can automatically assign them an 18 intelligence.

5. DMs and players should give some thought as to why mages would be sought-after individuals for adventuring groups even at low power levels: incredible intelligence. It is almost a triviality to state that magic-users have the highest intelligence ratings in the party. Mages represent the smartest group of their particular race and probably can out-think most of the fighters, clerics, and thieves they associate with. If you're low level, having someone along who can think his way out of a problem is an asset you must have. Raistlin of the DRAGONLANCE® saga is an excellent example. Despite little actual spell-casting ability in the early stages, Raistlin was an invaluable companion. His example suggests further usefulness for mages. In the stories, Raistlin was by far the best educated of the Heroes of the Lance. In many worlds, mages may be the only literate members of the group, and certainly they should be by far the best read. Having someone well-educated about the world along on a low-level adventure just might be the difference between life and death. Some things are hard to simulate in a game in which the magic-user *player* has an intelligence equal to that of his companions, I'll admit.

In my world, only magic-users can consult the *Players Handbook* concerning magic-user spells, and only clerics can look up clerical spells. This is to reflect the simple fact that the first thing mages ever do in their training is memorize all such information. Indeed, their ability to memorize the whole thing backwards and forwards is the first test as to their capacity for magic use. Thus, if the party wants to know about a spell, whether the mage has it or not, they have to ask him. I also give mages some knowledge of a variety of old, dead languages used on many maps and other written information the group finds. Unless he's high level, a thief is just not reliable on such things and he's unlikely to have encountered such languages before in any event. I also give mages the benefit of having a general knowledge of magical items (let's face it, most of your players probably know the DMG treasure list by heart) and other various magical effects. When the group encounters a new item or strange effect, the mage may know something about its abilities or limitations.

The key to making low-level mages playable is not by vastly increasing their spell power. Remember, any system will apply to high-level wizards and to NPCs, so those spell-point systems will increase the power of high-level spell-casters as well as low-level ones. And for a class that's already very powerful at high level, that might be trouble balance-wise. An examination of most fantasy game systems that use spell-point systems reveals an interesting fact: The mages have considerably lower numbers of available spells. With the large number of spells available to an AD&D® game mage, things could get really out of hand. Low-level mages can be made more interesting and flexible by relaxing some of the tight restrictions on spells available, increasing their value to a group apart from pure spell power, and perhaps making a small adjustment in the beginning number of spells (as opposed to a permanent addition from a spell-bonus system similar to that used by clerics).

Tim Lieberg
Rogers MN

I was most gratified by the response to my article "The Mystic College" (issue #123), especially the comments by Messrs. Argall, Cunningham, and Rudge printed in the "Forum" in issue #128. Reading their words prompted me to add a few additional comments of my own. First, however, I would like to make a few statements concerning the genesis of my article "The Mystic College." The original version of the article was written well over a year before the final version was published and was less than half as long. The revision involved in producing the second version had to be completed in about three weeks in order to meet a deadline. This meant that some subjects dealing with the school of magic were barely touched upon in the article, while others were omitted entirely. It came as no surprise to me when both Dave Rudge and David Carl Argall offered some excellent ideas for use with the school of magic that weren't in the published article. Some of their ideas were along similar lines I had in mind, but others were notions that had never even occurred to me. These were the ideas that I appreciated the most, because they show that no matter how much work one puts into a project, there is always room for improvement.

While reflecting upon this, it suddenly struck me that yet another important character had been overlooked for the school of magic: the sage. The school of magic is an ideal location for a sage to ply his trade. The sage would be an important member of the faculty (on par with the alchemist), most likely serving as the schools head librarian. A sage would be attracted to the school of magic primarily for the considerable mass of knowledge which would be congregated in the school's libraries, faculty, and even the students. The sage's duties would be light (the occasional lecture and so on), but he would be on call to provide his special knowledge when needed. The chance of any school of magic attracting a sage to its faculty is: 60% for a small school; 80% for a medium school; and 90% for a large school.

I must take issue with Mr. Argall's attack upon the financial guidelines set down in "The Mystic College." Although he was able to prove that the school of magic was very unlikely to make a profit, he missed the point that it's *supposed* to be that way. The school of magic was never envisioned as a get-rich-quick scheme. Few universities that I know of are ever accused of making runaway profits. The school of magic is an alternative to conventional adventuring. It is supposed to be a drain on the chancellor's purse and a challenge to keep it operating.

This doesn't mean that the school of magic will eventually bankrupt the chancellor. Mr. Argall spoke of 30,000 gp per year minimum to keep a small school operating. That doesn't seem too outrageous to me. Why, I've played high-level characters who paid out more than that a year in taxes. If the chancellor can get a tax break for setting up his school of magic in a given community, or better yet a subsidy for doing so, then his expenses will drop considerably. Mr. Argall also seems to have overlooked the requirement for the schools lesser magic-users to hand over to the chancellor a sizable portion of any monetary treasure they gain adventuring while attached to the school of magic. This will vary considerably, but in a good adventuring year it will also help to keep down the cost of running the school. Then there are the numerous ways that imaginative DMs and players can use to make extra cash for the school of magic, including those suggested by David Argall himself.

While on this subject, I will also explain why students and faculty members pay a one-time-only fee for joining the school of magic. Basically, it is because this is often all the character can afford. There are no student loans or government grants in D&D® game worlds. This entry fee will in many cases represent the entire life savings of a faculty member or a student's family. There simply isn't any more money to be squeezed from these individuals. Even so, faculty members do pay out additional fees, in the form of the chancellor's share of their adventuring treasure; students will pay this when they become faculty members.

James A. Yates
Rockwood MI

I know that a number of people do not play the AD&D® game by the rules; a lot of people ad-lib. I think this is good. People who play role-playing games should supplement the rules if they don't agree with them.

I have been a player of the AD&D® game for five years and have supplemented many rules. My friends and I change rules because the rules don't seem as realistic as possible.

For example, why should you get experience points for magical items? They help you get experience points in fighting monsters. Another question I have is about gold. How does it help you fight better? In my campaign, when we get the required experience points for a new level, we don't train. You learn by experience in combat. You can play to get further training for more experience points or pay to train on a new weapon.

We give magic-users 50 xp per level of the spell cast times two, if the spell is purposeful. Magic-users also get experience points for killing monsters but pay to acquire new spells. We do a similar thing with thieving abilities. We have a lot of other variations on the game, but we must still see the rules from the *DMG* and *Players Handbook* most of the time.

What I would really like people to do is to change rules a little for their own enjoyment. It's their game and they should do with it what they think is right. In this way, DMs can make their game more exciting and enjoyable for their group.

Ed Kruse
Strongsville OH

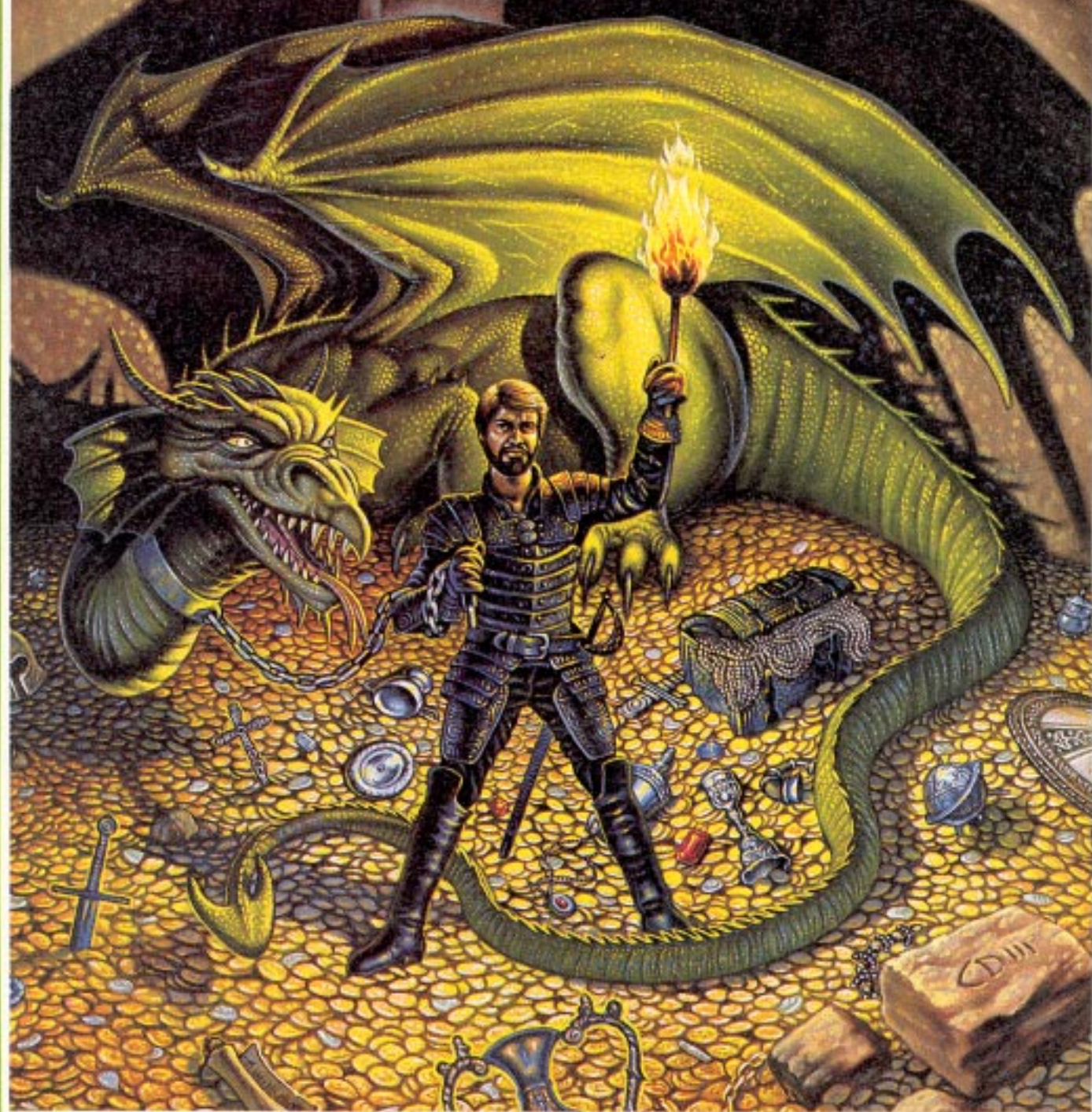
The current experience-point system for the AD&D® game is very well thought out, but unrealistic. First I would like to know why experience points are given for finding treasure. It's not very logical to say that all treasure must be guarded by powerful monsters. Perhaps it was lost by long-ago guards or the guards have died. An entire party could advance a level by accidentally stumbling on a treasure (not to say a DM would unbalance the game like that). Another problem is the way experience points are given out for killing monsters. It is crazy to say that an 18th-level party could gain experience from slaying a band of kobolds but not from 6 months of training. And what about that fighter locked in the demilich's dungeon for two years. Characters should study their skills for at least 30 minutes a day or lose experience points equal to their level $\times 10$ unless this takes them below the level they are currently at. Also, those who study excessively for two days should receive the reverse effect.

David Choi
Etobicoke, Ontario

(continued on page 38)



Dragons





The Dragon's Bestiary

Dragons of earth, sea, and space

Most people think of dragons in terms of their colors (red, green, blue, etc.), but we found some unusual dragons in our files that should provide a nasty turn for any adventurers. Unless otherwise noted, the dragons described here share the characteristics common to all dragonkind, as per pages 29-31 of the *Monster Manual*. Size categories are determined with a 1d8 roll, and all pass through the same age categories,

with certain numbers of hit points per hit die. Most of these dragons have 60' infravision, superb senses allowing them to *detect hidden or invisible creatures* within 1" per age level, a fear-producing aura appearing at adult age, and improved saving throws. Additionally, most of them may be subdued, bribed, or flattered, and the amount of treasure they have depends on their ages.

AQUATIC DRAGON

Created by: Gregory Detwiler

FREQUENCY: *Very rare*

NO. APPEARING: 1-2

ARMOR CLASS: 1 (3 on land)

MOVE: 9"/24"

HIT DICE: 9-11

% IN LAIR: 15%

TREASURE TYPE: H, S, T

NO. OF ATTACKS: 4 claws, 1 bite, and 1 tail strike

DAMAGE/ATTACK: 1-4/1-4/1-4/1-12/2-16

SPECIAL ATTACKS: *Breath weapon, spell use, high intelligence, six attacks per round*

SPECIAL DEFENSES: *Acute senses, saving-throw bonuses*

MAGIC RESISTANCE: *Standard*

INTELLIGENCE: *High*

ALIGNMENT: *Lawful evil*

SIZE: L (70' long)

PSIONIC ABILITY: *Nil*

CHANCE OF:

Speaking: 95%

Magic Use: 10%

Sleeping: 25%

LEVEL/XP VALUE: 9-10 HD: VIII/2,900 + 14 per hit point; 11 HD: IX/5,800 + 16 per hit point

The aquatic dragon is a water-breathing relative of the terrestrial dragons, more closely related to them than to the dragon turtle or Oriental lung wang (sea dragon). It is fully as deadly as its winged cousins, although it cannot fly. This sea-green creature lives in all depths of the ocean, immune to changes in water pressure from some inborn magical ability.

Although it cannot breathe air, it can take great draughts of water in its lungs to enable it to "hold its breath" out of the water for 10 rounds at a time, though it cannot then bite. The creature is thus able to raid surface vessels and coastal communities. The aquatic dragon, unlike most others, bears its young alive. Aquatic dragons live equally well in fresh or salt water.

The aquatic dragon is amazingly maneuverable for such a large beast. In this environment, it moves above or below a large enemy or a party of small foes, striking out at once with its jaws, all four clawed feet, and its spike-tipped tail. Even deadlier is the creature's breath weapon. Three times per day, the aquatic dragon can exhale a concentrated cloud of heavy particles which, after being in contact with the water for one segment, undergo a mysterious chemical reaction. Anything within the cloud (a cone 15' by 60') is affected as if it had undergone a *lightning bolt* attack for 4-40 hp damage. Aquatic dragons often use this attack on the underside of a major ship or warship; the ship's bottom is thus blasted away, and the vessel sinks in 1-4 rounds unless the wood saves vs. *lightning*. This attack has no effect in the air.

Almost all aquatic dragons are capable of speaking, being intelligent; very few of them use magic, however, because of the difficulty in acquiring spell books and scrolls underwater. A spell-using dragon of this type often has as its lair a cavern with a chamber filled with air to preserve books and papers. Magical items of interest to aquatic dragons are those which enable their users to go without breathing or which are normally regarded by air-breathers as cursed, because they fill the lungs of the user with water. These items enable an aquatic dragon to conduct



Illustration by Jim Holloway

extended plundering and hunting forays on the land of coastal areas. As for spells, the dragon gains a 1st-level magic-user spell the first two stages of its life, a 2nd-level spell for each of the next two, a 3rd-level spell for each of the two after that, and one 4th-level spell for each of the last two life stages.

The entrances of aquatic dragon lairs are tangled in seaweed, one strand of which is often tied to the beast's tail when

it is asleep, thus awakening the dragon with its movement when someone tries to enter. Consequently, it is difficult at best to catch an aquatic dragon napping. Additionally, these dragons are immune to the effects of strangle weed, as their neck muscles and pressure-resistant bodies are so strong, so they often use this plant in their lairs as well.

Aquatic dragons gain +2 to their saving throws vs. water-based attacks, +1 to

their saving throws vs. fire-based attacks, and have a -2 penalty to their saving throws vs. electrical attacks. These same values also apply to their chances to be struck in combat by creatures using these powers (such as elementals) and to the number of hit points taken per hit die of damage from such effects. Thus, an attack by a lightning quasi elemental would do +2 hp/HD damage and have a +2 bonus to hit.

ICHTHYODRAKE

Created by: Gregory Detwiler

FREQUENCY: *Very rare*

NO. APPEARING: 1-2

ARMOR CLASS: 2

MOVE: //15"

HIT DICE: 10-12

% IN LAIR: Nil

TREASURE TYPE: *See below*

NO. OF ATTACKS: 1 bite

DAMAGE/ATTACK: 8-64

SPECIAL ATTACKS: *Breath weapon, swallowing whole, continuous damage, high-damage bite*

SPECIAL DEFENSES: *Acute senses, saving-throw bonuses*

MAGIC RESISTANCE: *Standard*

INTELLIGENCE: *Animal*

ALIGNMENT: *Neutral*

SIZE: *L (100' long)*

PSIONIC ABILITY: *Nil*

LEVEL/XP VALUE: 10 HD: VIII/4200 + 14
per hit point; 11-12 HD: IX/6,100 + 16
per hit point

The ichthyodrake is one of the largest and most fearsome marine predators in existence. A rich deep green in color, it resembles a titanic fish with a dragon's head. The creature is apparently a distant relative of the true dragons, as it shares the same size and age categories, sensory and detection powers (except for infravision, which it lacks), fear-producing aura, and saving-throw bonuses as other dragons. However, these dragons cannot speak or use magic, and they never seem to sleep. Worse yet, ichthyodrakes cannot be subdued, bribed, or flattered. A single V-shaped set of gills lies just behind the eyes and jaw attachments. Ichthyodrakes are so massive that they can ram and sink even the largest ocean-going vessels, though they prefer a diet of fish to a diet of people.

Few other sea creatures have developed the use of sound to the same degree as the ichthyodrake, which uses this ability well in its search for food. Ichthyodrakes reside at the top of the food pyramid, chiefly preying on "normal" predatory fishes such as sharks and barracudas. Such a monster's fins can be made to quiver at will, sending vibrations which can be felt in a 10-mile radius. These vibrations attract the attention of oceanic

predators and bring them swarming in, where they are attacked and eaten. The ichthyodrake's jaws are so large that even the largest ordinary sharks can be swallowed whole. Once inside, prey takes 2-12 hp acid damage per round from the ichthyodrake's digestive fluids until wholly digested. If a character is swallowed and digested, and the ichthyodrake is cut open afterward, any surviving magical or metallic gear that saved vs. acid is found in the creature's stomach. Digested characters cannot be brought back to life by any

means short of a *wish*.

When dealing with particularly powerful single foes, ships, or parties, the ichthyodrake can use its breath weapon three times per day. This is a *sonic blast* that sends severe vibrations through the water in a 20'-long by 80'-wide cone. Any creature caught in the area of effect takes 4-40 hp damage, and all nonliving materials must save vs. crushing blow. Because of this and the other powers it possesses, the ichthyodrake has no known natural enemies, except for powerful adventurers.



ASTRAL DRAGON

Created *by*: Gregory Detwiler

FREQUENCY: *Very rare*

NO. APPEARING: 1-2

ARMOR CLASS: -2

MOVE: 6"/30" (MC: E); 150" on Astral plane

HIT DICE: 13-15

% IN LAIR: 40%

TREASURE TYPE: H, S, T, U, V

NO. OF ATTACKS: 4 claws, 1 bite, and 1 tail strike

DAMAGE/ATTACK: 1-4/1-4/1-4/1-4/3-12/2-16

SPECIAL ATTACKS: *Breath weapon, spell use, bite severs astral cord, surprises on roll of 1-9 on 1d10 in Astral plane, six attacks per round, high intelligence*

SPECIAL DEFENSES: *Never surprised, acute senses, saving-throw bonuses, low armor class, magic resistance*

MAGIC RESISTANCE: 50%

INTELLIGENCE: *Genius*

ALIGNMENT: *Neutral*

SIZE: L (80' long)

PSIONIC ABILITY: *See below*

CHANCE OF:

Speaking: 99%

Magic Use: 99%

Sleeping: Nil

LEVEL/XP VALUE: 13-14 HD: X/13,250 + 18 per hit point; 15 HD: X/1 7,550 + 20 per hit point

The astral dragon is, as its name implies, a native of the Astral plane. It is also one of the most powerful of all dragons because of certain special abilities allied to its usual dragon advantages. The dragon is of the same cloudy silver color as the Astral plane, thus enhancing its surprise value on its home territory. Also, its vision can penetrate the silvery blur to a distance of 10 miles, so it cannot be surprised in turn. The astral dragon can traverse the planes at will, as if using *plane shift*, at a rate of one plane per round. In physical shape, it resembles a gold dragon or higher Oriental dragon, as it lacks wings and is whiplike and thin. On the Prime Material plane, a special organ in its head allows this dragon to fly; it has great difficulty walking on surfaces in gravity, however.

Surprisingly, the astral dragon can move very fast on the Astral plane, at 150" per round (an ability perhaps related to the unusual movement abilities of the githyanki, as per page 72 of the *Manual of the Planes*). Its body is so supple that it can tie itself in a knot, and it can bend so that the head and the spike-tipped tail, as well as the four clawed feet, can be brought to bear against a single opponent. Although they need little food, astral dragons like to gorge themselves — githyanki war parties being favorite prey.

The bite of the astral dragon is its most dreaded attack. The bite itself does 2-16 hp damage, but when the dragon's jaws hit, there is a 20% chance that a victim's silver cord (if present) will be severed, as

if it were struck by a githyanki's special *silver sword*. Individual astral travelers are usually separated from their group and thus slain. If the spell-caster responsible for the trip (using *astral spell* or the like) is the one slain, the entire party dies in one blow. For this reason, magic-users and characters endowed with psionic abilities are primary targets when an astral dragon battles a party in the Astral plane. The astral dragon can sense the use of psionic or psionic-like powers (as per page 78 in the *DMG*) in any opponent within a range of 240'. The dragon cannot use psionics itself and is not immune to psionic attacks, though it gains a +6 saving throw vs. psionic blast.

The astral dragon may use its breath weapon six times per day. This breath weapon, a cylinder of magical force 180' long by 10' wide, affects characters caught in its radius in the same manner as a *feeblemind* spell if a saving throw vs. breath weapon is failed. This effectively short-circuits spell-casters and psionics-users (including creatures such as mind flayers) and may effectively strand the party in the Astral plane. Since movement in the Astral plane is based upon intelligence, this also means that affected characters can go no faster than 30' per round. Worse yet, victims cannot come up with battle tactics, and the DM must take this into account during combat.

The birth of an astral dragon is far different from that of ordinary dragons. A female astral dragon lays one 5'-diameter egg every few hundred years, then carries it with her for many years more. Over

time, the egg swells to 10' across, and a hole opens at one end through which the infant dragon can emerge. Since there are no regular caves or other lairs on the Astral plane, the dragon's egg becomes its lair. As the dragon gets older and larger, the egg continues to grow at a slow pace until it is 30' across and very thin, though still strong (how this is accomplished has never been resolved). The egg is the same color as astral space, making it virtually invisible unless one is within 30' of it or if peering in the darkened open end. It has AC -2 and takes 30 hp damage in order to break a hole in it large enough for a man to pass through. Young astral dragons use their eggs for treasure storage until more suitable lairs are found later in life. The astral dragon and its egg are always linked by some magical mental link; an astral dragon traveling to other planes or other parts of the Astral plane can always find its way back to its lair, even during a psychic wind. When an astral dragon enters adulthood, it leaves its egg for another lair — often the abandoned fortress or dwelling of another race of creatures (usually githyanki).

An astral dragon is one of the most powerful spell-casters of all dragons. A very young astral dragon has the spell repertoire of a 1st-level magic-user, the next age has that of a 2nd-level magic-user, and so on, so that an ancient astral dragon is equivalent to an 8th-level magic-user in spell ability. Further, for every 200 years of age beyond 401 years (when the astral dragon becomes ancient), the dragon gains another level of spell ability. Younger astral dragons typically spend a great deal of time on the Prime Material plane, where they are able to age quickly, and tend to pass more time in the Astral plane as they grow older. Ancient astral dragons almost never leave the Astral plane, and they have no known limits on their life spans. There are reports of an astral dragon with the powers of a 12th-level Wizard who was able to create magical items, and more powerful dragons are hinted at in legends among the githyanki. An astral dragon can vary its spells through scrolls and spell books, being capable of learning any spell a normal magic-user can. The dragon's claws are slender and supple enough to enable the dragon to open and read scrolls, and the beast can cast any spell from a magic-user's scroll.

The astral dragon is, like all dragons, driven by its greed for acquiring treasure, and thus travels the planes looking for it. Its neighbors, the githyanki, are favorite targets; the ornate armor and weapons of the githyanki, being both magical and gem-encrusted, are a dragon's dream treasure. It is said that old and ancient astral dragons have more githyanki magical items and treasure than even the largest githyanki castle has. The gear of githzerai raiding parties and astral travelers is also much enjoyed. The treasure troves of



astral dragons are the richest of any in magical items, though due to the nature of the Astral plane, many of these items seem nonmagical until they are taken to the Prime Material plane. Those items that can be used by an astral dragon are usually carried with it on its travels.

Astral dragons are subject to a strange and rare disease, *astralomit*, that eliminates the dragon's ability to travel back and forth between the planes. This ail-

ment has a 1% chance per *plane shift* of striking the dragon when it reaches a plane other than the Astral plane. Once the dragon discovers that it is permanently separated from its home plane, it often goes insane, savagely attacking any and all creatures around it. Spell-casting of any sort is impossible to the dragon in its frenzied state, but its breath weapon is unaffected, and the strength of its madness causes all of its physical attacks to do

double damage. The sick dragon fights unceasingly for 2-5 days without rest, then collapses and dies within 1-4 hours. No known cure exists for this disease, except for a *wish* spell. If the astral dragon can return to the Astral plane via a portal or someone else's spell (which must overcome the dragon's innate magic resistance), its illness and madness subside, although the dragon will never again be able to travel to other planes.

WEREDRAGON

Created by: Ed Greenwood

FREQUENCY: *Very rare*

NO. APPEARING: 1

ARMOR CLASS: 2 in *wereform* (10 in *human form*)

MOVE: 9"/24" (MC: B) (12").

HIT DICE: 7-9

% IN LAIR: *See below*

TREASURE TYPE: H, Q, S, T; X

NO. OF ATTACKS: 2 *claws* and 1 *bite* (1 *weapon in human form*)

DAMAGE/ATTACK: 1-6/1-6/4-24 (by *weapon type in human form*)

SPECIAL ATTACKS: *Minor breath weapon, minor spell use, high intelligence*

SPECIAL DEFENSES: *Never surprised, spell immunities, silver or magical weapons needed to hit, acute senses, saving-throw bonuses*

MAGIC RESISTANCE: *Standard*

INTELLIGENCE: *Very to genius*

ALIGNMENT: *Chaotic neutral*

SIZE: L (12-36' long) or *man-size in human form*

PSIONIC ABILITY: *Nil*

CHANCE OF:

Speaking: 100%

Magic Use: 100% (*see below*)

Sleeping: *Nil*

LEVEL/XP VALUE: 7-8 HD: VII/1, 775 + 10 per hit point; 9 HD: IX/3,000 + 12 per hit point

Weredragons are exceedingly rare creatures. They are the source of many folk tales concerning beautiful women transformed into dragons; this is due to the weredragon's ability to assume the form of a comely human female whenever desired. Weredragons usually live among humans, revealing their dragon forms only in times of personal peril or great crisis.

Weredragons are fertile in both human and dragon forms; they are always female and always produce other weredragons, whether the father was a human or another dragon of any sort. The name "weredragon" is not entirely accurate, as this creature does not seem to have lycanthropy in the same way other were-creatures do. Weredragons cannot be "cured" of their abilities, nor are they able to transmit them to other creatures by biting or any other means. Furthermore, the phases of the moon have no effect on the ability of weredragons to change form. They are, however, immune to attacks by

normal weapons.

In human-form, a weredragon appears as a human female of about 20 years of age (regardless of the dragon's age), of any racial type, with a comeliness of at least 18. In addition to the usual abilities of dragons, a weredragon has 90' *infravision*, can *detect hidden or invisible objects* within 30', can use *tongues* (as in the third-level magic-user spell) at will, and can cast *light* and *darkness* 15' radius once

each every six turns. Weredragons retain full knowledge and awareness in either form, and most are consummate actors, so that humans are usually unaware of the weredragon's true nature. A weredragon's strength in human form is the equivalent of 18/00.

Weredragons are immune to all mind-affecting spells, as if they possessed wisdom scores of 25 (*see page 7, Legends & Lore*). Otherwise, they have standard



magic resistance. Weredragons never truly sleep and cannot be surprised. They also eat prodigiously (without appearing to gain weight) whenever an opportunity like a banquet presents itself. Transformation from one form to another is completely within the control of the weredragon, is silent, takes an entire round, does not affect the weredragon's hit points, and utterly destroys any armor or clothing worn if used in human form. Weredragons can thus change shape or remain in one form for as long as desired.

In dragon form, weredragons are slim and splendid, usually an iridescent blue and silver in color, and most closely resemble wingless copper dragons in physical shape and size (a magical organ in their brains allows flight). A weredragon's jaws do 4-24 hp damage, and it eats anything organic, including carrion. If attacked

from behind, the weredragon's rear claws do the same damage as the front claws; if it pounces from above, a weredragon can attack prey with all four claws and its bite in a single round. In dragon form, a weredragon is able to breathe a cloud of blue vapors three times per day, in a cone 70' long and 25' in base diameter. Within their confines, these vapors will (for 2-4 rounds): cause *silence*; snuff out (and prevent the creation of) natural or magical fire, heat, or electrical discharges or attacks; and dispel any illusions. The cone of vapors remains stationary despite natural or magical gusts of wind, and vanishes at the end of the 2-4 round period after having reacted with the surrounding air.

Weredragons do not consort with others of their own kind (whom they can recognize on sight in either form, just as they can recognize any *polymorphed* or *shape*

changed dragon in any form). They prefer dwelling in cities or courts to wilderness solitude. These creatures are not as vain as other dragons and cannot be subdued as a dragon can, although they often submit to capture or temporary dominance if they deem it wisest. In human form, weredragons often amass great treasure by beguiling rich suitors; later, these suitors are slain by the weredragon, which has returned to its dragon form. Weredragons are usually the equal of any sage when dealing with the history of the lands they have inhabited. Much of the history and aims of these creatures, however, remains a mystery. They are known from legend in the FORGOTTEN REALMS™ fantasy setting, and one is said to have lived in the great city of Waterdeep as recently as 20 years past, having lived for years as the consort of a military officer.

FANG DRAGON

Created by: Ed Greenwood

FREQUENCY: *Very rare*

NO. APPEARING: 1

ARMOR CLASS: 1

MOVE: 12"/22" (MC: E)

HIT DICE: 9-11 *plus special*

% IN LAIR: 30%

TREASURE TYPE: A, R, S, T, Z

NO. OF ATTACKS: 2 claws, 1 bite, and 1 tail strike

DAMAGE/ATTACK: 2-8/2-8/3-18/2-16

SPECIAL ATTACKS: *Soulbite, four attacks per round, high intelligence*

SPECIAL DEFENSES: *Acute senses, saving-throw bonuses*

MAGIC RESISTANCE: *Standard*

INTELLIGENCE: *Average to very*

ALIGNMENT: *Chaotic neutral*

SIZE: L (36' long)

PSIONIC ABILITY: Nil

CHANCE OF:

Speaking: 80%

Magic Use: Nil (*but see below*)

Sleeping: 20%

LEVEL/XP VALUE: 9-10 HD: VIII/3,300 +

14 per hit point; 11 HD: VIII/4,950 + 16 per hit point

Among the rarest of dragonkind in the FORGOTTEN REALMS setting is the fang dragon, a fearsome foe that is greedier and more rapacious than its cousins — and far less cowardly. Fang dragons have little magical ability, but instead have enhanced combative powers. They have thick body armor that rises into spurs on limb joints and a long, forked tail that ends in two scythelike, bony blades. Fang dragons fly poorly but are skilled at rising with a single clap of their wings, to lunge forward with lightning speed and pounce on prey within 90'.

The attack of a fang dragon involves raking its victim with its claws and slashing with its tail (the tail attack having an 80% chance of knocking over a small- or man-size victim, and a 40% chance of

stunning such a victim for one round). Any claw attack, in addition to its normal damage, has a 60% chance of slashing the intended target with the fang dragon's body spurs, doing an amount of damage equal to the victim's armor class (no damage for AC 0 or better).

Though a fang dragon has no breath weapon, its bite can have terrible effects. If a 20 is rolled for the dragon's attack, the bitten victim must save vs. death magic or have his life force drained. The victim

loses all of his hit points at once, and the dragon gains the current hit points of the victim (i.e., before the bite damage of the successful *soulbite* attack is subtracted) for 4-16 rounds. Damage done to the fang dragon is first subtracted from these "stolen" hit points during this time. The restoration of stolen life can be accomplished if enough *cure wounds* spells are placed upon the victim's body to completely heal all the victim's lost hit points; this must be done within a period of time



equal to the victim's constitution score in rounds. Otherwise, the life force of the victim cannot be restored by any means short of a *wish*. Slaying the fang dragon within the same amount of time is also an option, though this merely brings the victim to zero hit points in an unconscious state. The victim's brow and breast must then be bathed with the fluids of the dragon's heart and brain to recover the lost hit points. Powdered fang dragon's fangs are a valued ingredient in the manu-

facture of a variety of magical swords (such as a *sword +2, nine lives stealer*).

Fang dragons do not cast magic spells, except by reading scrolls useable by all classes that they seize or bargain for. They have occasionally used certain wands, rods, and weapons that can be used by any class of character, but this is rarely seen. Fang dragons have excellent vocal control, and are thus able to mimic human voices very effectively, though they rarely use this for trickery.

Fang dragons prefer to dwell in rocky regions, and roam far from their lairs in search of food, which they carry off to rocky pinnacles or other secluded, defensive positions far from their real lairs. Fang dragons protect their lairs in their absence by rolling large boulders before the doors (they are as physically strong as stone giants). A fang dragon usually speaks common, its alignment tongue, 1-6 other dragon languages, and snippets of local demi-human or humanoid tongues.

SAND DRAGON

Created by: Jeffrey S. Johnson

FREQUENCY: *Very rare*

NO. APPEARING: 1

ARMOR CLASS: 0

MOVE: 12"/24" (9" in sand)

HIT DICE: 10-12

% IN LAIR: 60%

TREASURE TYPE: H, S, T

NO. OF ATTACKS: 2 claws and 1 bite

DAMAGE/ATTACK: 1-8/1-8/2-20

SPECIAL ATTACKS: *Breath weapon, spell use, surprise on 1-9 on 1d10, high intelligence*

SPECIAL DEFENSES: *Low armor class, acute senses, saving-throw bonuses, magic resistance*

MAGIC RESISTANCE: 20%

INTELLIGENCE: *Exceptional*

ALIGNMENT: *Neutral*

SIZE: L (38' long)

PSIONIC ABILITY: *Nil*

CHANCE OF:

Speaking: 80%

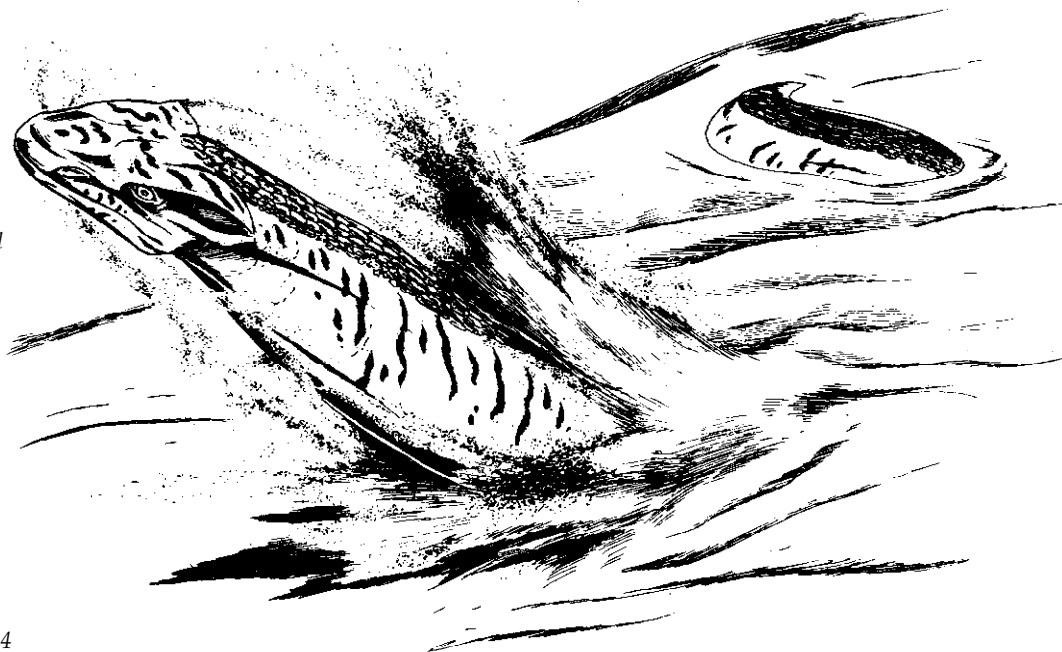
Magic Use: 80%

Sleeping: 30%

LEVEL/XP VALUE: 10 HD: VIII/4,950 + 14 per hit point; 11-12 HD: IX/7,250 + 16 per hit point

Sand dragons are of a unique race of dragons which inhabit warm climates with large, sand-covered areas such as deserts or beaches. Sand dragons can be easily identified by their long, wormlike bodies and their four short, muscular legs which end in webbed feet suitable for digging and swimming. The dragon's head is diamond-shaped and flat, with bright blue eyes. A sand dragon's body has rows of seashell scales lining the back, from the base of the skull to the tip of the forked tail. The color of the dragon's hide varies with its natural environment; desert dwellers are brown in color, and beach dwellers are white.

Sand dragons are, for the most part, nonaggressive creatures. They will speak with adventuring parties, and may even aid them with information. However, when provoked, sand dragons can become powerful enemies. The devastating breath weapon of the sand dragon is a ray 2' wide and 120' long, which turns any living thing it touches into pure, loose, white sand (save vs. breath weapon at + 1).



Restoration of a character is possible only with the use of a *wish*, though some reports have indicated that desperate adventurers successfully used *rock to mud, mud to rock, stone shape, and stone to flesh* (in that order) to restore characters, and achieved success against all expectations.

Sand dragons gain magic-user and druidic spells by age level, though they do not otherwise function as druids and must learn these spells from other sand dragons as they grow up. Only verbal components are required to cast these spells, which are acquired as follows:

Very young: One first-level magic-user spell

Young: One first-level druidic spell

Subadult: One second-level magic-user spell

Young adult: One second-level druidic spell

Adult: One third-level magic-user spell

Old: One third-level druidic spell

Very old: One fourth-level magic-user spell

Ancient: One fourth-level druidic spell

Sand dragons bury themselves beneath the sand to sleep and hide from their enemies. When hidden, sand dragons are completely camouflaged and undetectable. When they choose, they pop their heads from beneath the sand, surprising their enemies 90% of the time. Sand dragons can hold their breath for up to half an hour in any environment.

The sand dragon often has a fixed lair, though it tends to wander over great distances. Treasures are important to dragons, and the sand dragon is no exception. The sand dragon's belongings are usually buried deep beneath the lair's floor.

The reproductive process of the sand dragon is relatively slow. Every 10 years, the female dragon lays three eggs, buries them deep beneath the sand, and abandons them. One year later, the eggs hatch, and the infant sand dragons must seek out their parents or other sand dragons in order to be brought into the loose community of their kind and to be educated in magic. Few sand dragons survive to adulthood near civilized areas, and this breed is usually found only in uninhabited deserts.

STONE DRAGON

Created by: Mike Persinger

FREQUENCY: *Very rare*

NO. APPEARING: 1

ARMOR CLASS: 0

MOVE: 9"; 1" burrowing through rock; 6" burrowing through earth

HIT DICE: 7-9

% IN LAIR: 45%

TREASURE TYPE: H, Q (x2)

NO. OF ATTACKS: 2 claws and 1 bite

DAMAGE/ATTACK: 1-6/1-6/5-20

SPECIAL ATTACKS: Missiles (boulder breath weapon), breath weapon, spell use, high intelligence

SPECIAL DEFENSES: Acute senses, saving-throw bonuses, low armor class, weapon breaking

MAGIC RESISTANCE: Standard

INTELLIGENCE: *Very*

ALIGNMENT: *Lawful neutral*

SIZE: L (35' long)

PSIONIC ABILITY: Nil

CHANCE OF:

Speaking: 100%

Magic-use: 100%

Sleeping: 50%

LEVEL/XP VALUE: 10 HD: VIII/4,800 + 14 per hit points; 11-12 HD: IX/7,200 + 16 per hit point

This solitary dragon inhabits rocky, deserted areas, and often makes its lair inside a cave with two or more exits. The stone dragon eats rocks for sustenance, with gems being considered delicacies. They rarely interfere with the affairs of men, though when confronted they can prove very helpful or harmful. Stone dragons share the same general characteristics that all dragons do, but they lack wings. Instead, stone dragons can leap five times per day as if using the first-level magic-user spell *jump*.

Stone dragons are gray in color, each looking very much like a clump of rocks. If located in rocky terrain, a stone dragon has a 55% chance of blending in with the rocks, effectively concealing itself. Sharp weapons do half damage and must save vs. crushing blow on contact with such creatures, breaking and doing no damage if they fail; missile weapons must also save or be destroyed. Blunt weapons do full damage and will not break. Stone dragons save vs. fire and acid at -1, and take +1 hp damage per die of damage done on these attacks. Stone dragons save vs. cold at +1, with damage being -1 per die. Earth-based spells that normally have no saving throw do only half damage or have half the effect against a stone dragon; for example, animated rocks and conjured earth elementals only do half damage when they hit, and *earthquake* has a 1 in 16 chance of killing a stone dragon. Earth-based spells that do allow a saving throw do half or no damage to stone dragons, depending on the dragon's saving throw. *Flesh to stone* and *mud to rock* (and their



reverses) have no effect on stone dragons.

The stone dragon has three breath weapons, each usable three times per day. The first breath weapon shoots 5-10 large (3' diameter) rocks from its mouth. These rocks are waste products of the dragon's diet. These rocks are expelled at a rate of one per segment, so one rock may be targeted at any opponent (thus, up to 10 people can actually be targeted, assuming 10 rocks are available). The range for hitting targets is 2"/4"/6" for short/medium/long range. A target must be at least 1" away from the dragon to be fired upon. The rocks have a +2 bonus to hit, and each rock does 2-7 hp damage. Note that normal missile range "to hit" penalties still apply.

The second weapon available to the stone dragon is a gas cloud 5" wide, 6" long, and 3" deep which loses effectiveness after one round. This acts like a *slow* spell for as many rounds as the dragon has hit dice. A successful save vs. breath weapon means that the spell has no effect. The stone dragon is immune to its own breath weapon, but it is not immune to a magic-user's *slow* spell.

The third breath weapon is also a gas cloud 5" wide, 6" long, and 3" deep that loses its effectiveness after one round. Failure to save vs. breath weapon indicates

that the victim has turned to stone. The effects of this are permanent, though the usual magical methods may be used to reverse the petrified victim's condition.

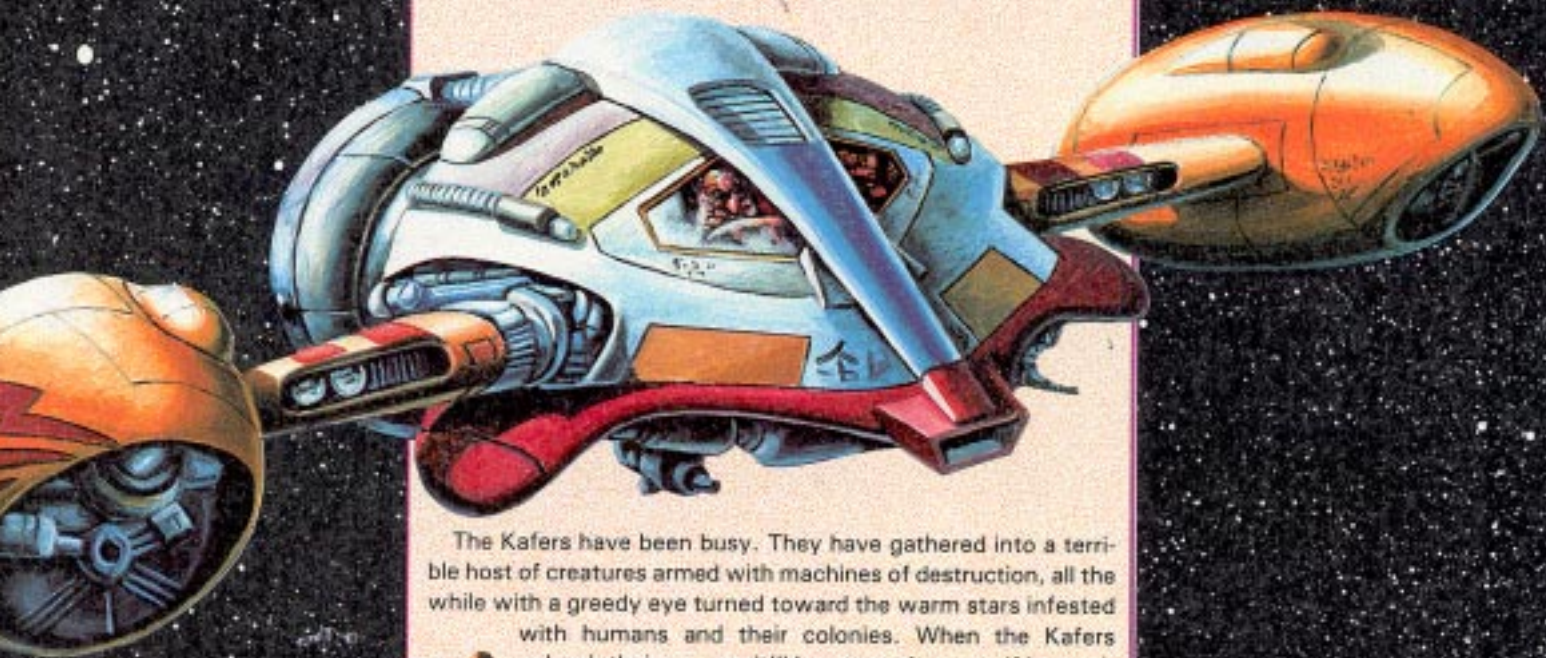
Stone dragons prefer gems over the more common types of treasure, and will readily trade other treasures for them, sometimes paying a price twice the item is worth.

Upon reaching the fifth age category, a stone dragon receives the ability to cast *stone shape* once per day. At the seventh age category, he may cast it twice per day. At the eighth age level, the stone dragon may cast a *statue* spell once every two days with no chance of system shock failure.

Additionally, all stone dragons receive the following spells, each gained at successive age categories starting from very young age: *allies*, *shatter*, *passwall*, *transmute rock to mud*, *wall of stone*, *conjure earth elemental*, *stone tell*, and *earthquake*. *Allies* is a spell-like power that acts as a *charm monster* spell and takes one turn to cast. It affects only rock-based creatures (i.e., rock reptiles, xorn, umber hulks, earth elementals, etc.). The creature gets a saving throw to avoid the effects. All other information on this spell is treated as the *charm monster* spell.

INVASION!

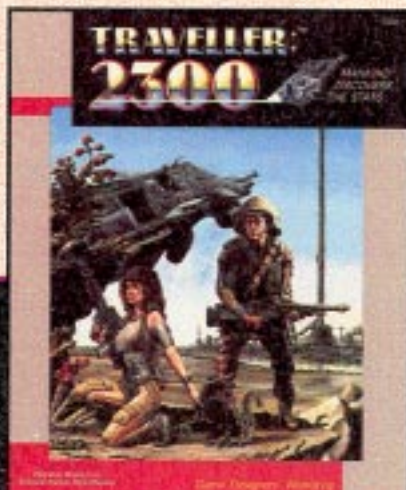
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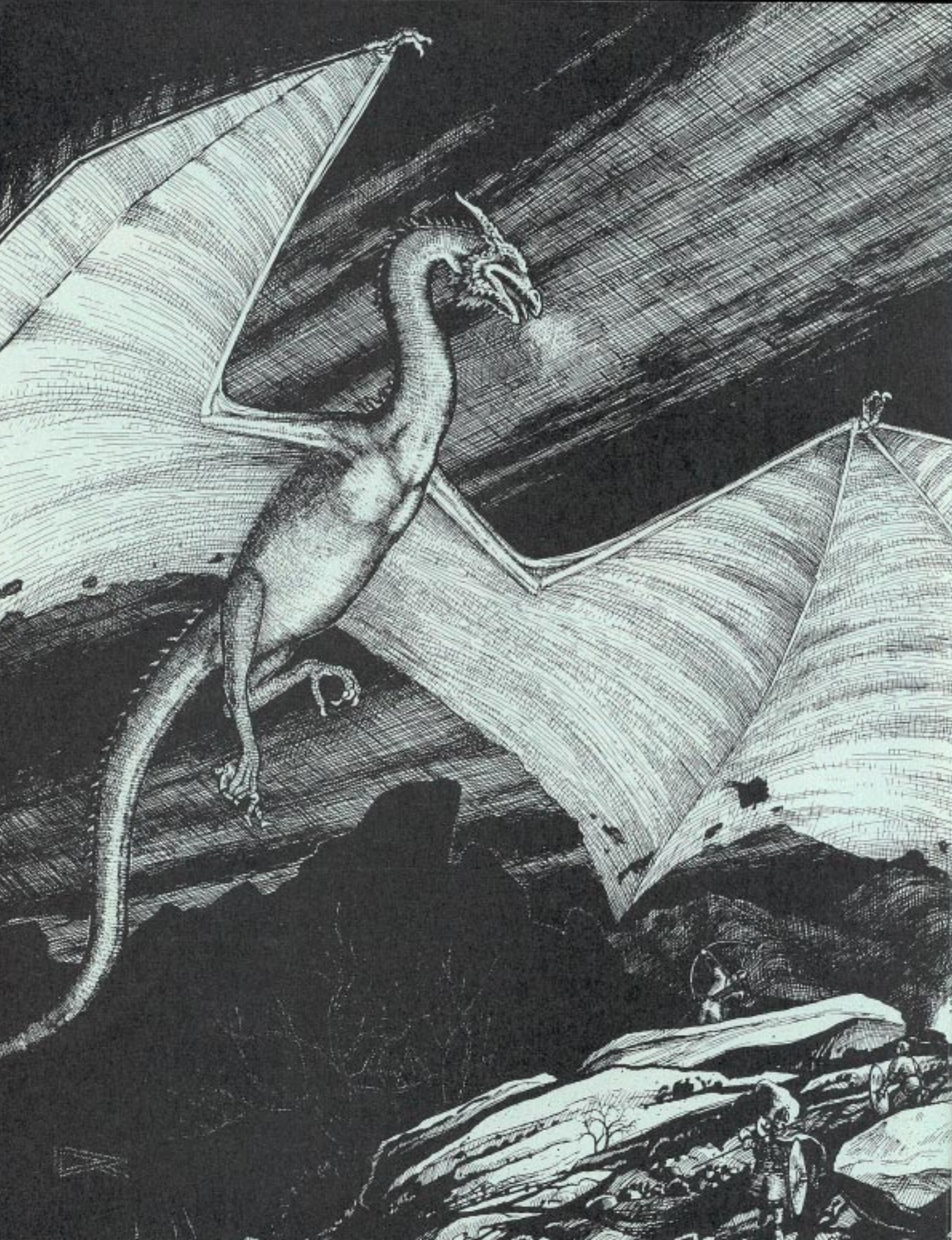
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Give Dragons A Fighting Chance

Want to make your dragons really scary?

The dragons of legend are mighty individuals, but gamers can always use a few suggestions to keep dragons interesting and deadly. The suggestions herein can be adopted for AD&D®-game dragons of any sort — even for Oriental dragons and dragon turtles.

Physical attacks

Dragons will always be renowned for their breath weapons. Any dragon should be able to exhale a conical breath weapon of the appropriate type with a 30° width, extending at least 2' for every hit point the dragon possesses. Both the physical damage from a dragon's breath weapon and the total length of the area of effect should equal the dragon's maximum hit-point total (as in the AD&D® game) rather than its current hit points (as in the D&D® game), because damage to the dragon's hide has little effect on the creature's remarkable chest muscles and lungs.

A dragon's size and strength surely increase as it grows. The maximum total damage from any dragon's claw/claw/bite attack could be made roughly equal to its hit points. This requires only a little extra work when the DM creates the individual dragon. A newly hatched (6 hp) white dragon's attacks might do only 1/1d4 damage points (enough to kill most zero-

level humans), but a huge, ancient (88 hp) red dragon would do 5-20/5-20/4-48 hp damage. Other writers for DRAGON® Magazine have suggested similar systems, and have also assigned extra damage from a dragon's rear claws, tails, and wings. [See: "Dragon Damage Revised," in issue #98; "Dragon Damage Revisited," in issue #110; and, "Self Defense For Dragons," in the Best of DRAGON Magazine Anthology, volume III.] Of course, would-be dragon-slayers could be tossed into the air or dropped from great heights by a dragon in flight.

Since older dragons are far stronger than most other creatures with equal hit dice, it makes sense to add the number of a dragon's age category to its "to hit" and initiative rolls. Newly hatched dragons have only a few hit points but are ferocious. Older dragons are truly exceptional fighting machines. Dragons defending their eggs or young are mad with rage; these parents might get +4 on all "to hit" and damage rolls, while suffering an armor-class penalty of -4.

Special abilities

Dragons in works of fiction have even more subtle abilities. According to J.R.R. Tolkien, Ursula Le Guin, and other authors, even talking with a dragon is a

severe test of one's willpower. Thus, a speaking dragon may at any time make a reasonable *suggestion* to all creatures within earshot. Those who understand the dragon may be required to make saving throws vs. spells (with wisdom bonuses) or else comply.

The mere presence of a dragon inspires fear. If a dragon of adult age or older roars or otherwise acts dangerously, but is not flying overhead or charging its foes, all creatures within sight must roll a saving throw vs. spells (with wisdom bonuses) at +4, or else flee in panic for 1-10 rounds. Only creatures with hit dice greater than or equal to the dragon's (and those creature immune to magical *fear*) are immune to this effect. Additional bonuses of +5, +3, and +1 apply against the presence of dragons of adult, old, and very-old age, respectively, as per the usual fear-aura saving throws.

Most dragons could have personalized abilities, and even nonspeaking dragons can have unexpected special powers. A dragon might surprise adventurers with *jaws of sharpness*, a *hypnotic gaze*, burning spittle, a *roar of blasting*, *scales of scintillating color*, or even *claws of cancellation*. Subtle clues — disarticulated skeletons, entranced victims, charred grass, discarded items that might once have been magical, etc. — may forewarn adventurers in a well-managed campaign of the presence of a uniquely magical dragon. Dragons can also make intelligent use of most magical items; experiment with the miscellaneous magical items table and see what you get.

The dragons of legend are also sturdy. Certainly, some of them can only be struck by magical weapons. Dragons could regenerate at least 1 hp per turn, and some might regrow severed limbs and wings overnight.

Even with spells, it is difficult to conquer a major dragon. Some dragons could be assigned a magic resistance of 10% per age category, and this could remain undiminished even if the caster is above 11th level. If a dragon fails its magic-resistance check, its saving throws should still be easy. If the spell normally allows a saving throw (*command*, *charm monster*, *hold monster*, and other popular antidragon magics), a DM might give any dragon only one chance in 20 of failure. If the spell does not ordinarily allow a save (*harm*, *magic missile*, *power word*, *Otto's dance*, *time stop*, and other easy dragon-killers), it still has no effect if the dragon rolls its hit dice or less on 1d20. Any dragon should be immune to any natural or magical attack that duplicates its breath weapon (fire, acid, etc.). Because of their tremendous lung power, all dragons are probably immune to gas attacks, including *stinking clouds* and *cloudkill*.

Surprising a dragon should be very difficult. A *silence*, 15' radius spell or silent movement must be used, or a group of adventurers will surely awaken a sleep

ing dragon. Unless the dragon is upwind, the smell of the approaching PCs should be enough to awaken it. Many intelligent dragons also keep lesser creatures as lookouts. Talking dragons could have personalities and political skills, and even chaotic ones could arrange alliances with monsters, humans, and other potential helpers.

Dragon magic

Another way to individualize dragons is to give them highly effective magical spells [as is also done in "*Serpents and Sorcery*," in this issue]. Spells used by dragons might require only verbal components, and they probably have very short casting times. Since spell levels are low, the spells themselves could be more powerful counterparts to the usual spells, and they might have longer durations and larger areas of effect.

The following spells would doubtless be popular with dragons, and any DM can have fun developing a "dragon version" of any other spell from any category. Each shows how it could be altered when used by any dragon.

Alarm: This spell announces the type of intruder to the dragon. If *silenced*, the dragon still senses that the alarm has been triggered. This always awakens a sleeping dragon.

Burning hands: When used by a fire-breathing dragon, this spell does double its normal damage with twice the range.

Charm person: The saving throw is made by victims at -4.

Charm monster: The saving throw is made by victims at -4.

Dimension door: This spell becomes the equivalent of *teleport without error*.

Fear: The spell allows a saving throw at -4 for most creatures. Paladins, cavaliers, and those with *Serten's spell immunity* are still immune but lose combat initiative. Other dragons, undead, trolls, golems, and those with *mind blank* are immune.

Fireball: This spell does 1d12 hp damage per hit die when cast by fire-breathing dragons, and 1d8 hp damage when cast by any other dragon.

Haste: This spell enables a dragon to use a claw/claw/bite attack routine plus a breath attack in one round, or two claw/claw/bite routines in one round. It also improves armor class by 4 levels, and automatically gives the dragon the initiative in any round.

Hold person: The saving throw is at -4, and the duration is one day per hit die of the dragon casting the spell.

Invisibility: This has the same effect as *improved invisibility* when cast by a dragon.

Lightning bolt: This spell does 1d12 hp damage per hit die when cast by lightning-breathing dragons, and 1d8 hp damage when cast by any other dragon.

Magic missile: This produces bolts of energy that do 3-6 hp damage per *magic missile*.

Mirror image: When used by a dragon, 1-8 images are produced. Each image has the same armor class as the dragon, and each must be struck to make it disappear.

Polymorph other: This spell is equivalent to the standard *polymorph any object* spell.

Polymorph self: This spell grants the special abilities of the new form, and is equivalent to the standard shape change spell.

Shield: This spell improves a dragon's armor class by one level per hit die of the dragon, and gives immunity to *magic missiles*.

Shocking grasp: When used by a lightning-breathing dragon, this spell produces a charge which delivers 1-6 hp damage per hit die of the dragon.

Shout: This roaring spell permanently deafens everyone in range who is not wearing ear plugs or protected by magical *silence*. Deaf spell-casters have a 50% chance of spell failure (see *holy word*, in the *Players Handbook*, page 53). *Cure deafness* or *heal* is required to remove the deafness.

Spider climb: A creature struck by any claw attack from a dragon who cast this spell must save vs. spells or stick helplessly to the claw. (DMs must decide how large a creature can stick to any particular dragon's claw.) Only one creature can adhere to a claw at any time, but the claw can still injure other opponents.

Strength: This doubles the damage inflicted by each claw and bite attack.

Suggestion: The saving throw is made at a -4 penalty at best. No saving throw is normally allowed (see *fear*) if the *suggestion* is very reasonable.

Web: This creates web-strands that will not burn and are invulnerable to the dragon's breath, so the dragon can breathe upon trapped creatures at its leisure.

At the DM's discretion, all magic-using dragons might use *detect magic*, *read magic*, *dispel magic*, *vocalize*, *wizard mark*, and *identify* at will, once per round, as often as desired. An adult magic-using dragon could cast legend lore once per day.

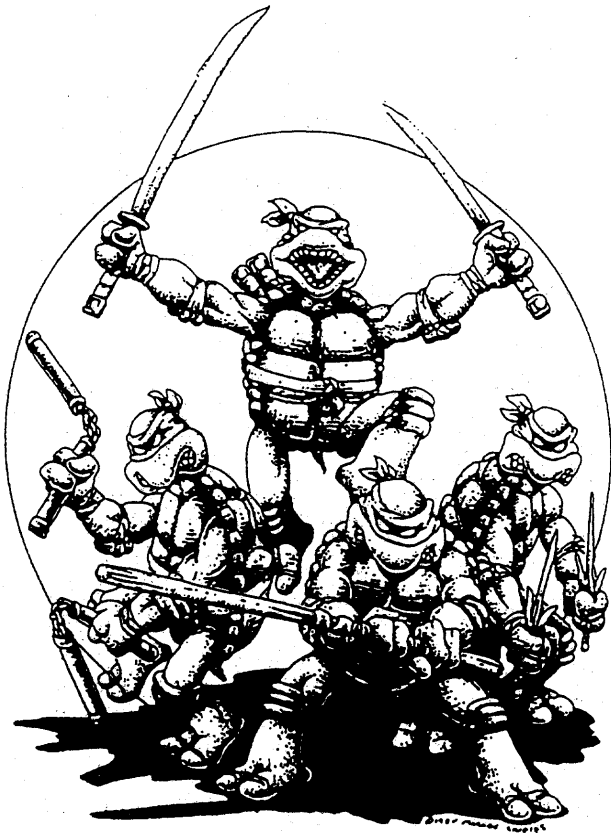
Finally, some AD&D®-game dragons should have more hit dice or more spells than usual (this is already true in D&D® games). An ancient gold dragon with 20 hit dice might be able to cast eight-level spells. Such a grand creature might come in response to a holy man's *gate* spell.

Given the above suggestions for uprating the dragon in AD&D® games, what sorts of effects will using these ideas have? Let's look at two examples.

Razisiz the Regular

Razisiz (from the *DMG*, page 81) is a huge, ancient, spell-casting blue dragon (AC 2; MV 9"/24"; HD 10; hp 80; #AT 3; Dmg 1-6/1-6/3-24; SA breath weapon, spell use, high intelligence; SD *fear* aura, saving

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throw bonus, *detects invisible and hidden objects*; AL LE). He can breath a lightning bolt 100' long and 5' wide. His spells are: *charm person*, *shield*, *shocking grasp*, *ESP*, *mirror image*, *strength*, *fireball*, and *haste*. He lives alone in a cave and has a huge pile of treasure. Here, he is played according to the usual rules on dragons.

One day, Razisiz is caught napping by a small town's leading citizens. The party contains two 7th-level fighters with normal long swords, an unarmed 3rd-level cleric, an unarmed 7th-level magic-user, and a 5th-level thief with a normal short sword. The fighters are naturally burly, and one has 18/01 strength. Because of a *strength* spell from the magic-user, the other fighter now has 18/10 strength. The cautious magic-user has cast *vocalize* on himself, and he used clairvoyance on the dragon's cave, so everyone knows Razisiz is asleep. No one has armor because no one can afford it.

Round 1: The cleric sneaks into the cave, stands 120' away from Razisiz, and casts *silence*, 15' radius on the dragon's head. The cleric flees the scene with two *cure light wounds* spells (he has a 12 wisdom) to wait outside for the other adventurers. The rest of the party approaches the sleeping dragon.

Round 2: The fighters and thief walk to the dragon's posterior and ready their weapons. The magic-user casts *slow* on

the dragon while it continues to snooze, making sure the other characters are out of the area of effect.

Round 3: The magic-user casts a *stinking cloud* over the dragon's head, away from the fighters and thief. This awakens the dragon but incapacitates it throughout this round and the next (we assume Razisiz makes his saving throw against the spell). At the same time, the fighters and the thief strike the dragon's unprotected backside. When sleeping, *slowed*, or incapacitated, the dragon's effective armor class is only 6, so the strong fighters need only a 7 or better on 1d20. Both hit; damage is 1d12, with a +3 strength bonus. The fighters each do 10 hp damage (about average). The thief, striking from behind, needs a 13 or better. He succeeds and rolls a 4 for damage which, tripled, gives 12 hp damage (again, about average).

Round 4: The fighters each hit again for 9 hp damage apiece, and are entitled to a second attack this round. Both hit, and they each do an additional 10 hp damage. The thief runs away. The magic-user runs to a distance of 110', out of the range of the breath weapon but in range for magic missiles, just in case the fighters miss and the dragon is still alive at the beginning of round 5 — which it is.

Round 5: Razisiz is enraged — but the *slowed* dragon can only strike at the end of the round. The magic-user opens fire

with *magic missiles* as the fighters attack once more — and the fight is over. The fighters scream in triumph, and the cleric and thief return to celebrate. The magic-user sighs; he never got to use his other three *magic missile* spells or his *ice storm* spell. Rats!

Razisiz was almost the worst possible evil dragon, but he has been killed by five middle-level characters without magical items or protection, and without doing any damage to them. Two of the attackers even fled the battle!

Razisiz redux

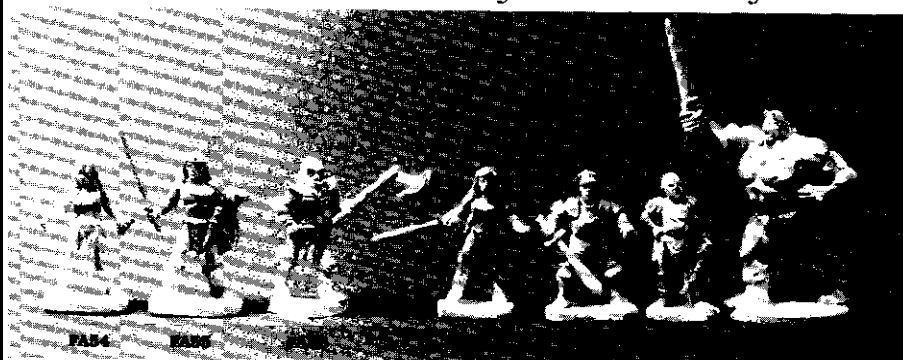
Razisiz II (using a few of the above suggestions for improving the dragon) is a huge, ancient, spell-casting blue dragon (AC 2; MV 9"/24"; HD 10; hp 80; #AT 3; Dmg 5-20/5-20/4-40; SA +8 "to hit" and to initiative, breathes *lightning* in a 30° arc extending 160', spell use, high intelligence, SD *fear* aura, magic resistance 80%, *detects hidden and invisible objects*, saving-throw bonus; AL LE). His spells are: *charm person*, *shield*, *shocking grasp*, *ESP*, *mirror image*, *strength*, *fireball*, and *haste*. He owns and uses a wand of conjuration. Razisiz has a set of spell books and has cast *find familiar*; he loves his cat very much. The lawful Razisiz keeps careful records, gives receipts for the required annual tribute from surrounding lands, and styles himself a polite and honorable businessman providing "protection" to "his" people.

Of course, Razisiz's demands are exorbitant. Razisiz's cave is finally approached by an attack squad composed of the nation's five toughest adventurers. The party includes two 13th-level fighters (100 hp each), a 12th-level cleric (80 hp), a 13th-level magic-user (40 hp), and a 13th-level thief (60 hp). The fighters are wearing gauntlets of ogre power and carry long swords +5. The cleric carries a mace +5, and the thief carries a short sword +5. The magic-user carries a dagger +5, and casts *minor globe of invulnerability*, *mirror image*, (four duplicates), and *Tenser's transformation* (giving him 40 hp more). These spells were selected because of the known difficulty of affecting Razisiz directly by magic. All party members have constitutions of 16 or higher. Each has purchased druidical *protection from lightning*, so that each will take only half or quarter damage from Razisiz's fell breath and gain a +4 bonus on saving throws vs. lightning. Each carries many protective devices and now has AC -4, but Razisiz needs only a 6 on 1d20 to hit each one.

Razisiz was asleep when seen by *clairvoyance* a few minutes ago, and he appeared unguarded. But when the black cat spotted the adventurers, it awakened its master and warned him. Now Razisiz is only playing possum. With his mouth just out of sight beneath one of his rich tapestries, he begins conjuring silently, taking advantage of his natural *vocalize* ability. He casts his dragonish versions of *shield*,

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shocking grasp, *haste*, and *strength* on himself. *Shield* drops his armor class to - 6. *Shocking grasp* gives his body an electric charge which will deliver 10-60 hp damage to the first opponent he strikes or who strikes him with a metal weapon. *Haste* enables Razisiz to use both a claw/claw/bite routine and his breath weapon (or two claw/claw/bite routines) in the same round; it also lowers his armor class further to - 10 (now the fighters will need to roll 10 or better to hit him; the thief and cleric will need 15 or better to hit; and the *transformed* magic-user will need 13 or better to hit). *Strength* doubles the damage from claw and bite attacks to 10-40/10-40/8-80. Finally, Razisiz manages to conjure six orcs with his wand, and he tells them to attack anyone who tries to cast a spell.

Round 1: The party enters the cave. The cleric casts *silence*, 15' radius on the "sleeping" dragon. Razisiz can no longer feel the vibrations of the approaching party, but he can smell them and can still cast his spells, thanks again to his *vocalize* ability. When the dragon can smell the party is within striking range, he casts *mirror image*, obtaining three duplicates. The battle is on.

Round 2: The *hasted* dragon automatically has the initiative. Razisiz sprays lightning on the magic-user (all *mirror images*) and one of the fighters. Each saves

and takes only 20 hp damage, thanks to the *protection from lightning* spells. Razisiz's claw attacks miss the same fighter, but the bite succeeds, doing 38 hp damage. The bite also delivers the *shocking grasp* charge (34 hp), but the lightning-protected fighter takes only 17 hp damage. Each fighter strikes twice and scores one hit; one hit struck a *mirror image* and caused it to disappear, but the second struck Razisiz and delivered 20 hp damage. The thief misses. The magic-user strikes twice and hits once, destroying another *mirror image*. The cleric had planned to try a *harm* spell but realizes he now has very little chance of touching the dragon. He is also mobbed by six orcs.

Round 3: The dragon breathes more lightning on the magic-user and the injured fighter. Each saves and takes 20 hp damage. The dragon also claws and bites the same fighter; this time, a claw attack does 18 hp and the bite does 42 hp, killing the fighter. The second fighter strikes twice and hits once, destroying the last *mirror image*. The cleric and the thief each kill an orc. The magic-user misses twice.

Round 4: The dragon uses two claw/claw/bite routines against the second fighter. Two bite and two claw attacks succeed, doing total damage in excess of 100 hp; the second fighter is killed. The cleric and the thief are still preoccupied by

the orcs, and each kills another. The magic-user strikes twice at Razisiz and hits once for 9 hp damage.

Round 5: The dragon uses two claw/claw/bite routines against the magic-user, and five of these hit. Four of them destroy the four *mirror images*, while the fifth is a claw attack that does 18 hp damage. The magic-user wisely chooses to flee. The cleric and the thief kill the last two orcs.

Round 6: The dragon uses his breath weapon against the fleeing magic-user. The magic-user fails his saving throw, and 40 hp damage from the dragon's breath kills him. The dragon then uses his claw/claw/bite attack against the thief. Each succeeds, and the thief takes 65 hp damage, shredding him. The cleric casts *dispel magic* on the dragon, in order to remove one or more of the *haste*, *strength*, and *shield* spells.

Round 7: All but one of the high-level party members is dead, and the dragon is not badly injured. Did the cleric succeed in dispelling the dragon's magic? Does the cleric now beat the odds, deliver a successful *command* spell, and conquer the dragon? Or does the cleric throw down his arms and appeal to the dragon's vanity? Does the dragon *charm* the cleric or throw a *fireball* at him? Does the dragon hold the cleric hostage or eat him immediately? As the battle nears its end, the odds are definitely in the blue dragon's favor.

Other groups of adventurers may develop other strategies to deal with Razisiz, and not all DMs handle combat details in the same way. Other DMs will think of ways to enhance dragons that are much better than my own suggestions. But dragons like Razisiz will always command respect. Defeating such a monster deserves a substantial reward in fame, experience, and wealth. A dragon should be a foe to remember — forever.

Other articles which have appeared in past issues of DRAGON® Magazine concerning the uprating of dragons include the following:

"Rearranging and Redefining the Mighty Dragon," in issue #38, which discussed some of the points made above;

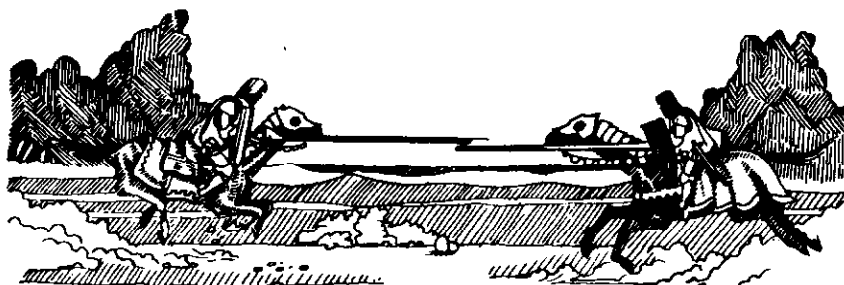
"True Dragons," in issue #50, which also discussed some dragon-improvement points;

"Dragons and Their Deities," from issue #86, concerning clerical dragons, their spell-casting powers, and worship; and

"Tailor-Made Treasure," from issue #98, concerning the contents of a dragon's treasure hoard.

Additionally, the dragon Flame, from "Into the Fire" in DUNGEON® Adventures issue #1, is highly instructive in terms of that dragons use of magical items, tactical planning, defensive construction in his lair and treasure-hoard composition. The crippled dragon Ancagaling, from "The Wounded Worm" in DUNGEON® issue #8, is also interesting for the same reasons, and is worth a DM's study.

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by Vince Garcia

Serpents and Sorcery

A little dragon-magic can go a long way

Illustration by Richard Bennett



Although respected for their mighty breath weapons, dragons have a spell-using capability that is often passed over. Magic comes naturally to these creatures and provides them with both additional means of protection and a greater degree of control over the surroundings they claim as their own. Some new guidelines for the casting and use of spells for dragons are presented in this article.

All dragons possess an innate ability to *read magic*, and they learn new spells with the same chances based upon intelligence as given in the *Players Handbook*, page 10. However, dragons do not need to use the spell write in order to learn a new spell; they need only study a written spell to learn it, and it is by this that they may increase whatever knowledge of spell-casting they receive initially from their parents or other instructors, if they should acquire certain useful tomes and scrolls. Thus, dragons need not create spell books of their own. The photographic quality of a dragon's memory is well known, and unlike human and demi-human spell-casters, dragons do not lose the memory of a spell once it is cast. Rather, the casting of spells tires a dragon so that it merely requires a period of rest in which to gather its strength to recast a spell of that level of power. Upon successfully learning a spell, the dragon forevermore retains the correct vocal and somatic components in its memory. This further means that the spell-casting dragon need not memorize a specific selection of spells on a given day, but may pick from the spells it knows to find the ones most suitable in a particular situation, requiring only the proper material components unless they are unnecessary due to the creature's special magical abilities or the spells' requirements.

The level of experience at which a dragon casts spells is based upon the formula for noting its saving throws. Up to young adult age (having 4 hp per hit dice), the dragon's level of magic-use equals its hit dice. From adult age onward, the dragon's total hit points are divided by four, with the result reflecting the level at which it both saves against and casts spells. An 88-hp red dragon may boast that, although it doesn't cast as many spells over the course of a day, its level of magic use is equal to that of a 22nd-level Arch-Mage!

The greatest problem posed to spell-casting dragons is the problem of handling material components. While some legends assert that the most ancient of these beasts have learned to do without material components in some instances, the overwhelming majority of spell-casting dragons find it a necessity to make use of standard material components. This can be difficult to manage for a creature as big as a house, and so dragons tend to avoid the use of small material components. Some dragons, nevertheless, through *polymorph* or special abilities with a particular elemental

force, may be able to use material components efficiently.

The sorts of spells employed by dragons tend to reflect those things in which dragons have an interest or with which they are familiar. Red dragons, for example, are well versed in those spells dealing with detecting or divining the nature of various types of valuables or magic, and the offensive spells utilized by them tend to be fire-based. Silver dragons, on the other hand, tend to utilize electrically based spells and are known to be fond of mind-affecting magic (which benefits a creature with an interest in humanity). A listing follows of various *Monster Manual* dragons and the spells they are fond of employing, along with ideas on how these dragons might use their spells.

Black dragons

These dragons often reside in fens, dark woods, or caves near such places. Thus, the spells they often employ are those which may be put to good effect in such terrain. Although restricted in the level of spells they may employ, these dragons are unique in that they need not employ material components for some spells usually requiring them. The spells they usually use follow.

First level: *affect normal fires*, *charm person*, *dancing lights*, *detect magic*, *enlarge* (this acts upon the dragon as the druidic *animal growth* spell, with comparable bonuses to damage potential), *light*, *magic missile*, *shield*, *ventriloquism*, and *taunt*.

Set up: Having discovered a group of adventurers camped near its lair, a young black dragon *enlarges* and employs a *dancing lights* spell in the hope of luring away a guard to investigate. It thereafter uses a *charm person* spell in the hope of gaining a servant, resorting to one-on-one melee if the target is unaffected.

Blue dragons

As is not surprising, blue dragons, who consider themselves masters of the sky, are prone to using electrical spells to protect their desert lairs. Their most frequently used spells include:

First level: *detect magic*, *hold portal*, *magic missile*, *shield*, *shocking grasp*, and *sleep*. Second level: *continual light*, *darkness 15' radius*, *detect good*, *forget*, *ray of enfeeblement*, and *strength* (this spell adds +2 hp damage to all physical attacks). Third level: *blink*, *dispel magic*, *feign death*, *lightning bolt*, *material*, and *suggestion*.

Set up: Confronted by a group of adventurers who infiltrated its cave, a blue dragon utilizes its *blink* spell to shift position in order to cast a *lightning bolt* or use its breath weapon before going into melee. Later, it *feigns death* to take its attackers off guard, and it attacks again.

Brass dragons

Like blue dragons, brass dragons prefer secluded deserts in which to lair. The drawback to such locales is that all too rarely does the dragon have the opportunity to converse with other intelligent creatures, one of its favorite pastimes. It also must be wary of confrontations with more powerful blue dragons. The spells it most often employs are:

First level: *charm person*, *comprehend languages*, *friends*, *magic missile*, *shocking grasp*, *sleep*, *taunt*, and *ventriloquism*. Second level: *continual light*, *detect evil*, *ESP*, *invisibility*, *magic mouth*, and *Tasha's uncontrollable hideous laughter*.

Set up: Spotting a group of adventurers as it invisibly flies overhead, a brass dragon activates spells to determine the general alignment of the fellowship and their possible intentions, making its presence known if the party is generally good —and trying to make some treasure off the meeting if it thinks of a way.

Bronze dragons

Often referred to as sea dragons for their habit of lairing near seas or other large bodies of water, bronze dragons (not unlike their brass dragon cousins) exhibit quite a degree of curiosity about other creatures, especially humans and demihumans. Renowned for their ability to assume animal form in which to get closer to targets of their interest, they retain the limitation of all *polymorphing* dragons in that their overall color is always prominently displayed on some portion of their altered form. The spells most often used by these dragons include:

First level: *affect normal fires*, *comprehend languages*, *enlarge* (this spell acts as the druidical *animal growth*, with accompanying bonuses to damage, and the reverse of this spell helps the creature assume smaller animal forms), *hold portal*, *identify*, *push*, *shocking grasp*, and *Tenser's floating disc*. Second level: *darkness 15' radius*, *detect evil*, *ESP*, *forget*, *mirror image*, and *web*. Third level: *clairaudience*, *clairvoyance*, *gust of wind*, *hold person*, *lightning bolt*, and *suggestion*. Fourth level: *charm monster*, *dispel illusion*, *dimension door*, *magic mirror*, *plant growth*, and *bestow curse*.

Set up: Unintentionally nearing the lair of an ancient bronze dragon, the adventurers are discovered by a number of charmed low-level monsters acting as its guardians. On being informed by its minions of the party's existence, the dragon may make its presence known, or more likely assumes animal form and tags along with the group for a while to watch their escapades — lending a hand if the party gets in trouble.

Copper dragons

Favoring rocky regions in which to dwell, copper dragons are infamous for

their lust for treasure. The spells they usually employ are geared to aid them in that regard and include:

First level: *charm person*, *detect magic*, *identify*, and *magic missile*. Second level: *detect evil*, *know alignment*, *locate object*, and *stinking cloud*. Third level: *dispel magic*, *item*, *material*, and *suggestion*.

Set up: While traveling through a mountainous area, the adventurers are confronted by a copper dragon who "requests" payment for passing through lands over which it claims dominion.

Gold dragons

The most powerful of all spell-casting dragons, gold dragons can be found in almost any climate. Because of their ability to assume human form, these dragons have no limitations on the spells they may cast when in that shape. Once again, however, the true color of the dragon is usually retained in the form of gold-hued hair or skin. In dragon form, the spells gold dragons most often use include:

First level: *affect normal fires*, *detect magic*, *hold portal*, and *shocking grasp*. Second level: *continual light*, *know alignment*, *mirror image*, and *ray of enfeeblement*. Third level: *blink*, *fireball*, *Melf's minute meteors*, and *hold person*. Fourth level: *charm monster*, *dimension door*, *shout*, and *stoneskin*. Fifth level: *cloudkill*, *dismissal*, *dolor*, and *telekinesis*. Sixth level: *anti-magic shell*, *eyebite*, *geas*, and *legend lore* (this spell gives the dragon exact knowledge on the subject being investigated).

Set up: Having been stymied in his attempts to discern the powers of a relic, a PC magic-user seeks out the isolated lair of a hermitic old sage, renowned throughout the region as a living library. That sage, of course, is an ancient gold dragon, who remains in human form most of the time.

Green dragons

Almost always encountered in woods or forests, green dragons are certainly among the most unpleasant of dragonkind, often using their powers as a means to bully and subjugate less powerful creatures. The spells they find most useful include:

First level: *burning hands*, *charm person*, *detect magic*, *light*, *magic missile*, *shield*, *sleep*, and *taunt*. Second level: *detect good*, *mirror image*, *ray of enfeeblement*, and *strength* (this spell adds +2 hp damage to physical attacks).

Set up: During their adventures, the PCs wander into a small and very unfriendly mountain village. Befriended by a talkative peasant girl, they learn that the village pays tribute to a green dragon living in the hills nearby, and that the elders are concerned that the fellowship's presence will bring down the monster's wrath. Should the PCs face the dragon, they will find the beast protected by charmed innocents.

Red dragons

The best known of dragonkind, these mountain-dwelling monsters are infamous for their greed and power. The spells they enjoy using include:

First level: *affect normal fires, burning hands, charm person, detect magic, fire-water, hold portal, identify, magic missile, melt, and ventriloquism*. Second level: *continual light, flaming sphere, detect good, locate object, mirror image, pyrotechnics, strength* (this spells adds +2 hp damage to physical attacks), and *wizard lock*. Third level: *blink, dispel magic, explosive runes, fireball, hold person, Melf's minute meteors, suggestion, and tongues*. Fourth level: *charm monster, dimension door, fire charm, fire shield, fire trap, polymorph self bestow curse, and wall of fire*.

Set up: Cunningly posing as a fire giant through the use of a *polymorph self* spell (and aided by a number of *charmed* helpers), a red dragon demands tribute from those making their way through a mountain pass it has decided to claim: Should the "giant" be attacked, those facing it realize what a critical underestimation of their foe they have made.

Silver dragons

As most adventurers know, silver dragons prefer mountaintops and even

cloud islands in which to dwell. As they may also assume the form of a human, typically a silver-haired damsel, they are unlimited in the types of spells they may cast. In dragon form, they most often employ these spells:

First level: *charm person, detect magic, friends, identify, magic missile, message, taunt, and unseen servant*. Second level: *audible glamer, ESP, forget, know alignment, mirror image, ray of enfeeblement, stinking cloud, and Tasha's uncontrollable hideous laughter*. Third level: *blink, dispel magic, gust of wind, hold person, phantasmal force, suggestion, wind wall, and tongues*. Fourth level: *charm monster, confusion, dispel illusion, and fumble*. Fifth level: *cone of cold, dolor feeblemind, and wall of force*.

Set up: Finding itself bored, a silver dragon assumes the form of a maiden and approaches a party of adventurers. If allowed to, it will accompany the fellowship to have some fun — and possibly play a prank or two.

White dragons

Although the least intelligent of dragons, these creatures can, on occasion, employ low-level spells, including:

First level: *Detect magic, light, magic missile, protection from good, sleep, and taunt*.

Set up: Using a snow storm to screen its movements, a white dragon living in the mountains swoops down upon a group of adventurers, hoping to capture a pack horse for food. It utilizes spells only if it is attacked and finds escape impractical, preferring to hit and run.

Other notes on magic

If a huge dragon might have difficulty handling spell components, it would have the same difficulty manipulating a scroll without tearing it. The DM may then consider allowing scroll use only for dragons of young-adult age or less. If the DM permits older dragons to use their natural *read magic* ability to employ scrolls, the formula for noting the creature's chances of successfully reading a scroll by level of magic-use should be the same as illustrated earlier: Divide the creature's hit points by four if the dragon is of adult age or older to find its level of magic-use, using the dragon's hit-dice score for magic-use level otherwise.

In considering the possibility of spells functioning differently for dragons than for normal spell-casters, the following suggestions are offered:

Alteration spells cast by a dragon upon itself will not permit the monster to dwindle its proportions as well as a smaller-sized being. *Polymorph self*, for example, might allow the largest dragons to assume human or giant proportions, but no smaller. Further, nothing done by a dragon allows it to completely hide its color; the true scale color will always be present somewhere in the dragon's altered figure.

Other spells of this sort which might raise the strength of normal characters would effectively add an additional +2 hp damage to the creature's claw/claw/bite routine.

Conjuration/summoning spells in most cases work the same for dragons as for other creatures. The subject of dragon familiars must be addressed, however. Assuming the dragon obtained a scroll of the spell *find familiar* (or found some other way of successfully casting the enchantment), the benefits imparted by a familiar would differ from the norm. A quasit, for instance, would not add a hit die to its dragon master, but would increase the dragon's effective level of magic-use by one level. A brownie familiar would not impart an 18 dexterity to a dragon, but a bonus of +4 to armor class would be received instead.

Divination spells might work far more effectively for dragons. *Legend lore* and *identify*, for instance, could provide exacting information to dragon spell-casters.

Enchantment/charm spells with long durations might last indefinitely for dragons. Thus, a *charmed* monster or character would remain in that state without the necessity of periodic saving-throw checks.



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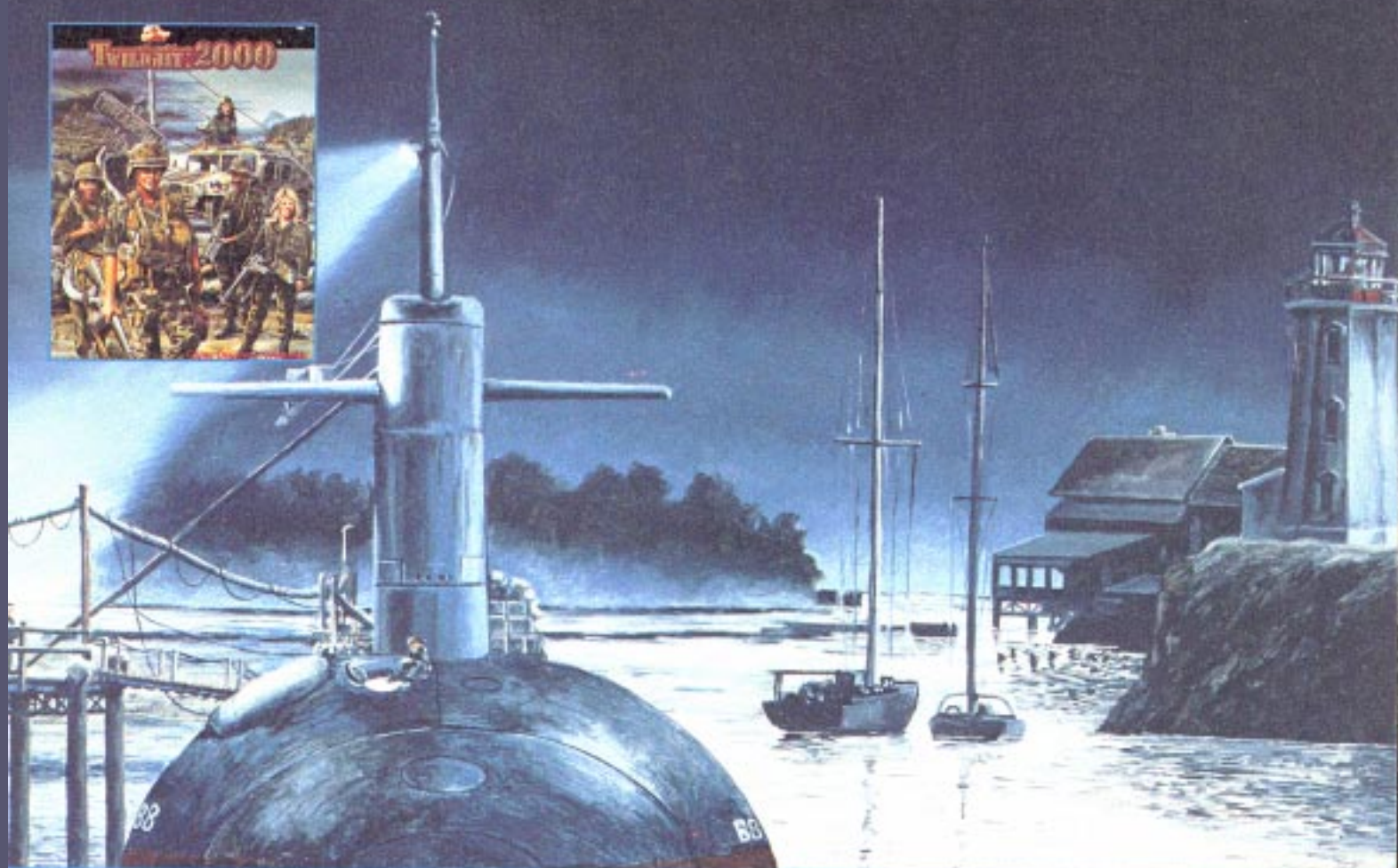
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by William Simpson

Lords & Legends

Fabulous riches and hideous death

In the AD&D® module S2 *White Plume Mountain* (later incorporated into S1-4 *Realms of Horror*) is a map showing the environs around that fabled dungeon. Northwest of White Plume Mountain on that map is a passage that reads:

**"BEYOND TO THE LAIR OF DRAGOTHA,
THE UNDEAD DRAGON,
WHERE FABULOUS RICHES AND HIDEOUS DEATH AWAIT."**

And that was all there was in all of the AD&D® game literature about Dragotha — until now.

DRAGOTHA

FREQUENCY: *Unique*
NO. APPEARING: 1
ARMOR CLASS: -3
MOVE: 12"/24" (MC: E)
HIT DICE: 19 (152 hp)
% IN LAIR: 99% (see below)
TREASURE TYPE: H, S, T, U, W x 2 (see below)
NO. OF ATTACKS: 3
DAMAGE/ATTACK: 5-12/5-12/6-36
SPECIAL ATTACKS: *Breath weapons; spell use; disease; fear aura; creation of undead followers*
SPECIAL DEFENSES: *Surprised only on a 1 on 1d12; spell and psionic immunities (see below); immune to electricity; regeneration; takes half damage from edged weapons; cannot be turned by clerics*
MAGIC RESISTANCE: 15%
INTELLIGENCE: *Supra-genius*
ALIGNMENT: *Neutral evil*
SIZE: L (48' long)
PSIONIC ABILITY: Nil
Attack/Defense Modes: *Nil/Immune to all attacks*
CHANCE OF:
Speaking: 100%
Magic use: 100%
Sleeping: Nil
LEVEL/XP Value: X/30,560

Originally from the first plane of the Nine Hells, Dragotha was in life a huge, ancient, red dragon — a consort of the evil dragon queen Tiamat. Being the most powerful of Tiamat's companions, he enjoyed privileges that no other dragon could hope for. However, like all who are in league with Tiamat, he was expendable. When Dragotha murdered another dragon who threatened his position with Tiamat, the dragon queen became furious and ordered Dragotha's death. Ready to obey her will (as well as eliminate a rival), the other dragons killed Dragotha. Dragotha, however, had made plans before his death to insure that he lived forever. He had contacted an unknown deity of death who, for personal reasons, agreed to restore "life" to Dragotha's body when Dragotha died. The deity restored Dragotha, but instead of renewed life, Dragotha was placed in an eternal cursed state resembling lichdom. Dragotha was allowed to escape to the Prime Material Plane, where the deity was sure Dragotha's rage would cause massive death and destruction — which would please this evil deity, who is rumored to have been Nerull the Reaper (described in the *WORLD OF GREYHAWK™* fantasy setting booklets).

Dragotha now lives in his lair on Oerth, in the northern part of the Flanaess.

Though mention of his lair on the map in *White Plume Mountain* makes it appear that he is located near that volcano-fortress (hex T3-70 on the maps that come with the *WORLD OF GREYHAWK™* fantasy setting boxed set), Dragotha's lair is actually in hex K4-58, on the edge of the Cold Marshes just north of the Howling Hills. He ventures out once every century or so to spend his fury on whomever he can find. The rest of his days are spent preparing for the day when he can challenge both Tiamat and the deity responsible for his curse. He does not venture out often, for he does not wish to draw unwanted attention. His influence across Oerth is thus small, though his ultimate plans are of mighty and merciless revenge. His lair is said to extend endlessly into the earth, and is filled with treasure and riches — but it is also said that Dragotha chooses only magical items that he can use himself, and he uses them freely if need be.

Dragotha appears to be a huge, skeletal dragon, with wings covered by a thin, clear membrane that allows flight when he flaps his wings. His eyes glow with a pale blue light, and his movements are intelligent and carefully considered most of the time. If enraged for some reason, Dragotha loses all self-control and lashes out savagely at all living beings nearby. It is said that his voice is always that of a soft, lisping whisper. Dragotha knows most of the languages of the Flanaess, and collects trivial bits of information from captives (apparently for his own curiosity) before slaying them.

While a red dragon, Dragotha was considered one of Tiamat's best fighters. He is still very capable. Dragotha attacks with his two powerful claws and his vicious bite. Any hit made by Dragotha not only does normal damage but also casts *cause disease* on living beings (a saving throw vs. spells negates this effect). Although his claws and bite are powerful, they are nothing compared to his powerful breath weapons. Because of his curse, Dragotha can use three different breath weapons, including a cone of frost similar to that of a white dragon, and a poisonous chlorine gas cloud similar to that of a green dragon. The cone of frost is 90' long with a base diameter of 30'; the gas cloud is 60' long, 40' wide, and 30' high. Each breath weapon does 152 hp damage if the victim fails his saving throw vs. breath weapon; the victim takes half damage if he makes his saving throw. Dragotha can use each of these two breath attacks two times daily.

However, sometimes Dragotha wishes to use his opponents to serve his needs. In this case, he uses his most powerful breath weapon: his dreaded *death wind*. This wind of negative energy causes all beings within range to save vs. breath weapon or die; slain humans, demi-humans, humanoids, and giantkind are then transformed into undead warriors who serve their slayer. Those who save take no physical damage, but have a -4

penalty applied to all saving throws, attacks, and ability scores (to a minimum score of 1) for 2-12 turns. Such survivors are weak from having their life force almost drained, and a second saving throw vs. spells (with wisdom bonuses applicable) must be made or else the victims are filled with *fear*, causing them to flee in terror and be unable to return to face Dragotha for 4-24 hours. This breath weapon may be used twice per day, resembles a blast of rippling black energy, and has the same dimensions as the cone of frost weapon.

A person changed by Dragotha into an undead warrior (known in legend as a *drakanman*) retains all hit dice, hit points, and strength scores, but loses all other learned skills and bonuses as well as psionit and spell-casting abilities. Each drakanman (unless magical items or armor dictate otherwise) has a base AC 7, with a bonus of -1 per level of the victim over 1st level to a limit of AC 0. (To determine the level of multiclassed characters, average the levels and round up.) Beings with less than 1 HD or of zero level simply become 1 HD drakanmen. Drakanmen (like Dragotha himself) are immune to all enchantment/charm and illusion/phantasm spells, all forms of *fear* and paralysis, poison, insanity, death-related spells, sunlight, psionic attacks, and all cold-based spells and effects. They strongly resemble zombies but gain normal reaction in

melee. Holy water does 2-8 hp damage per vial to them. Drakanmen are semi-intelligent, but they follow only Dragotha's orders, which are given in a coded language that only Dragotha speaks. They can use armor, shields, weapons, and simple magical devices — often the very ones that they used in life when they came to attack Dragotha. A resurrection spell can reverse this condition, if cast within seven days of the drakanman's creation; after that, only a wish will work (affecting only one drakanman per wish).

A drakanman is usually useful for 10-40 years, after which time it collapses and disintegrates; the victim cannot then be returned to life by any means. All drakanmen have a movement rate of 15". If unarmed, they strike once per round with a fist, doing 1-4 hp damage, plus any strength bonuses possessed in life.

Dragotha can control as many hit dice of warriors as he has hit points (152). Because of his powerful nature, Dragotha is aware of how close to this limit his combined force of drakanmen is, and he knows the relative power of individual drakanmen. Dragotha's control over his drakanmen allows him to select one of his individual drakanmen and see whatever that drakanman sees, though this activity cannot be performed while doing anything else. Switching to another drakanman's viewpoint takes one round. Dragotha can

still receive brief mental warnings from any one of his drakanmen at any time, if such were placed on guard duty and ordered to notify Dragotha if intruders appear. In such an event, Dragotha would receive the warning but would have to look through the drakanman's eyes to see what the problem was, as no other information but the "paging call" could be sent. The range of this mental effect is one mile. One of Dragotha's favorite tricks is to place his drakanmen in positions whereby they not only frighten away potential looters but also serve as spies.

Excess drakanmen not controlled by Dragotha (but produced by him) are given one last command by Dragotha and sent away; the command is limited to a few words, typically "Go back from whence ye came and kill all that ye see." The demigod Iuz, who rules the land south of Dragotha's lair, was rumored to have sent a hundred goblins to test his neighbor. Dragotha sent them back as 1-HD drakanmen that caused Iuz much regret.

In addition to his terrible breath weapons, Dragotha can also cast spells at the power of a 14th-level magic-user. He can cast seven first-level spells, six second, five third, four fourth, three fifth, two sixth, and one seventh. He can choose from any magic-user spells but must memorize them as any other magic-user. It is believed he already knows the spell write and has the permanent power to read magic and see *invisible objects*.

If wounded, Dragotha *regenerates* damage at the rate of 1 hp per turn. The mere sight of this monster causes all creatures within 120 yards and under 5 hit dice or levels to flee in panic. More powerful beings are allowed a saving throw vs. spells, though those with 8 hit dice or levels are immune to this effect. Living dragons who meet Dragotha immediately flee without bothering to attack, as they have heard of him and are terrified to be in the same area with him.

Dragotha has few weaknesses. Attackers may hit him with nonmagical weapons, and holy *swords* do double damage to him (edged weapons, however, do only half damage to his skeletal form). Like all undead, he is affected by holy water, which does 4-10 (2d4 +2) hp damage to him. Dragotha, although formerly a red dragon, is now vulnerable to fire due to his undead status, taking +1 per hit dice of damage.

Because Dragotha has many guards (20-80 levels worth at any one time) and because of his innate ability to see invisible creatures (even through the eyes of a drakanman), he is rarely surprised. All of his mazelike caverns are closely watched and trapped due to his desire for privacy. If caught in a no-escape situation, Dragotha attempts to bargain his way out. This does not mean that he will serve an earthly master, however, for he has vowed to never again be placed in the role of a servant.

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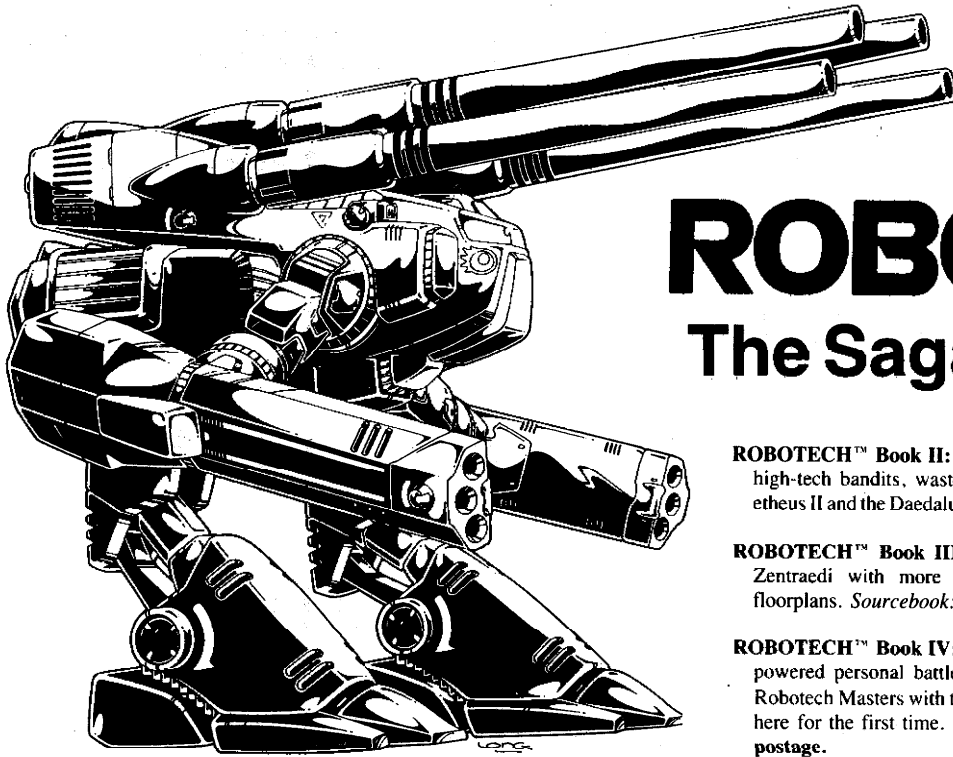
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ONE RPG Rules System Links A Universe of Adventures!





by Gregg Sharp

The Ecology of the Red Dragon

The color of blood and fire

The slender, middle-aged man considered the question for a moment, then pulled a map from a drawer and unfolded it on top of his desk. Placing bric-a-brac on the corners, he glanced from it to the young men who faced him in his study.

"You're sure that you want to hunt down a dragon?" he asked quietly. "Isn't there something smaller and less offensive you could go after, then work your way up?" He jabbed a finger down at a wooded area on the map. "Now, here is reputed to be the lair of a wondrous sort of being known as a cyclopskin. Much less impressive than a dragon, to be sure, but not as deadly. This cyclopskin—"

The brawny youth who seemed to be the leader placed a hand on his sword. "You calling me a coward, Nimodes?" he asked.

The sage hesitated and sighed, but he never looked up. He adjusted his spectacles. "Well, if it must be a dragon. . . ." He bent over the map. "Now, there are three dragons known to have lairs within two months' march of here. . . ."

A gangling youth moaned. "Two months! Haven't you got anything closer?"

"Sorry," Nimodes said, though truly he didn't sound sorry. "You take a dragon where it lies. Dragons are so voracious that they cover wide areas for their hunt-

ing grounds. When you're dealing with the big dragons, this range encompasses entire kingdoms as their own territories, so they never run out of food or loot. A wizard I know who lectures on the ecologies of various monsters says that dragons have no ecology: They ravage it. Now, if you want to meet some great wizard and have him bring a dragon to you, I can arrange for that. I'm merely a hedge wizard and a scholar, but I have some friends who could do this. Of course, it will cost you much. . . ."

After a short silence, the sage coughed and pointed to the map, to a range of mountains surrounded by forest. "Here is the nearest true dragon, in an ice cave atop the highest summit around. His human name is Frostbite, a friend to elf and dwarf. He is huge and of the silver breed. He hoards only knowledge, and this is the treasure that most seek from him."

"I think that one would not be worth the trouble." The brawny leader said casually. He had lost interest after hearing the words "hoards only knowledge." The sage noted this and dropped his gaze back to the map. It was as he'd expected.

"The second dragon is probably not worth it, either," he said, "as she is employed by the City-State of Helsford as a guardian, and even has a rank in the army

there. She is Frostbite's daughter. Here, then. Look over on the other end of this range, where another sort of dragon makes his lair. Pyre is his name, a red dragon. If I recall the passage correctly, *The Lorebook of Aramar* writes of him:

"Red blood his color and delight,
Red flame his breath that burns the
night,
Long scimitars he has for claws,
A fang-ringed cavern 'twixt his jaws,
Red armored is this deadly Pyre,
Who stole our gold to stoke his fire;
A hundred men sought out his lair —
Not one did Pyre the dragon spare."

At the mention of gold, the youths smiled and nudged one another. They didn't seem at all bothered by the last two lines — except, noted Nimodes, for one youth in the rear, who had an intense, bookish look about him. The sage briefly wondered if the youths had some powerful talisman or magical weapon that gave them such confidence. He immediately rejected the idea. They had nothing but youth and enthusiasm — and a fatal naivete. Nimodes vaguely recognized most of them as being of farming families. Nothing wrong with that, but challenging a red dragon wasn't in their league. Damn those lying adventurers, he thought, who had passed through the region last month. Loose talk about mounds of gold and easy victories had obviously borne results that he should have foreseen. These boys were going to die.

The brawny youth grinned widely. "Pyre. That sounds like the dragon for us. What can you tell us of it?"

"Him. A point in your favor." A worthless one, Nimodes added mentally. "Of the red dragons, it is the female which is the most dangerous, for she is less likely to bargain or surrender under duress." This does not mean that males are weak. The city that sent the small army after the gold was burned to the ground shortly thereafter. Only a handful of the residents survived the firestorm. That was two hundred years ago; since dragons grow throughout their lifespans, Pyre is all the mightier now — though perhaps weaker, too, as he is at least six centuries old.² He may be even older."

Much of the grinning ceased, but the youths did their best to look only mildly concerned at the news. The one youth in the rear who seemed to have doubts before now appeared concerned but very thoughtful. For some reason, Nimodes was pleased to see it.

"Oh, to be sure," Nimodes said smoothly, "the red dragon has its weaknesses. Pyre is old and getting to be slow, despite his incredible power. Sadly, his age has not diminished his might once he brings it to bear. He may yet have other vulnerabilities peculiar to him, if legends are to be believed."

"What sort of vulnerabilities?" It was the

youth in the back of the group. Nimodes noted from the boy's clothing that he was probably from one of the towns near the Greenwich River. The sage smiled. He had hated to think that the brawny lad was the brains of the group. Maybe the boys had a chance of surviving an encounter with Pyre, if not being talked out of it altogether in time. He certainly had no hope that they'd defeat the monster itself.

"Dragons, particularly the older ones, sleep a great deal — rather like house cats, I suppose." Nimodes sat back, looking past the group as he thought. "It is during sleep that older dragons are especially vulnerable, but only if their senses are on the wane. Their sleep is very deep, and they dream a tremendous amount, but dragons rarely speak of their dreams. Some say that dragons do not dream so much as they remember in full detail earlier experiences in their lives, rather like elves. Some texts say that they experience past lives in these slumbers, which accounts for a slight disorientation when they awaken." A dragon may sleep for extremely long periods of time, even hundreds of days. Sadly, awakening from such a long sleep leaves a dragon in a great hunger. When it awakens, it yearns to lay waste to its surroundings."

"You said something about vulnerabilities that were Pyre's alone," reminded the youth in the back.

Nimodes blinked. "Hmm. Yes. Well, during Pyre's attack upon Valesburgh two hundred years past, he was said to have lost an eye to a machine-hurled bolt. A survivor of the battle saw the dragon bleeding from his head, roaring as he clutched his right eye with a foreclaw. Pyre is now many hundreds of years old, and even a dragon's senses won't improve forever. He might be blind now."

The youths grinned at the news.

"Another weakness of the red dragon is its greed," Nimodes continued. "A red dragon seeks gold above all other things in life, for gold gives it status among other red dragons. The male red dragon's second great love is to eat, the third is to sleep.' But a love of gold will drive a male red dragon to any lengths. That focus has been used to their disadvantage in traps and trickery against them on a few occasions, though a vengeful red dragon is the worst of enemies. It is best to kill them swiftly rather than to tease or bargain with them; they are too dangerous."

The scholarly looking youth spoke up again. "I have heard that some dragons somehow resist spells."

Nimodes instantly placed the boy. Rumor said a river-town wizard had recently turned his apprentice loose. "True enough. Some are indeed able to throw off spells, but they cannot negate the existence of magic itself. They are merely tougher than we are, and they are partly magical in nature. Speaking of which, you should know that some dragons have gained from their parents knowledge of spell-casting.

Dragons that were abandoned at birth cannot even speak, much less cast spells, but they are rare ones in these lands. Pyre is the hatchling of Infernal, a female dragon who would not accept that any offspring of hers would be anything less than a menace to civilization. It is known that Pyre favors fire-based spells — ah, I had forgotten to say, yes, Pyre is a spell-caster, and he was very good at it, too. I cannot say how good he is at present; he has not been seen in some time. Pyre is said in legend to rejoice in the casting of fiery spells, always in the service of destruction."

"Magic is of little consequence to cold steel," sneered the brawny youth as he drew his blade to brandish it. Nimodes noticed that he held his blade in the manner of a club. A few rust splotches marred the steel, and there were notches along its length. Not a magical sword, though one that had seen quite a bit of use in its long-ago day. Nimodes resolved to talk to the apprentice later, privately if possible; it was a shame to throw away talent.

"Pyre uses magic, yes, and he breathes a cone of flame. His senses are exceptionally acute. Should he taste your blood, he can track you by scent to the ends of the world.⁵ His bite is powerful, his claws can hold a target fast, and his cone of fire can cleanse all remains away. Pyre is quite capable of melting away even . . . ah, nevermind. I know — fire is of little consequence to cold steel." Nimodes wished he could smile, but it was too painful.

The apprentice spoke up again. "Do your books mention any of Pyre's habits or traits that could be exploited?" At a bored look from the leader, he added, "No point in spending more time than we have to."

Nimodes nodded, pleased. "All red dragons share certain traits with the common house cat. They play with their food, like to sleep near a heat source, bury their wastes, and hate getting wet. Pyre, as with some of his kind, likes to talk with his food, meaning those who are unfortunate enough to be captured by him. One text of mine claims that Pyre is fond of riddles and jokes. To win a riddling contest with Pyre, he must be unable to guess the answer of one of yours while you must answer all three of his. It is unlikely, should Pyre gain the upper hand, that all his prisoners would escape. Perhaps one in ten could bargain his way out. Indeed, Pyre has a unique single trait which irritates others of his own kind: a fondness for puns. The worse the pun, the better Pyre likes it. A jester named Ferred the Moor once managed to get three adventurers out with a single pun. Of course, Ferred was legendary among jesters across this whole—"

"This is getting boring," interrupted the brawny youth. "We don't plan to let the dragon get the upper hand. Since you've been paid for information, make it useful. Where can we strike the most telling damage?"

The sage looked up into the leader's eyes, stared hard at him, then turned away. "As you wish. If you have the chance and can strike there, hit the eyes. A direct hit upon the eyes will cause any dragon to draw back. If the blow doesn't go deep, the dragon will go berserk and scour the area with flames and claw. It is told that the red dragon Firetongue was struck so, and only one returned to tell the tale. That one escaped when the enraged dragon brought the cavern down on her attackers and herself. Any dragon fears the loss of its senses. Blindness is the worst fate that a dragon could imagine, worse even than the loss of its wings and limbs. A blind dragon is at the mercy of all other creatures, vulnerable when it was once all-powerful; it cannot bear it."

"As for exploitable fears, Pyre has none that anyone knows about. Perhaps he has only the one common to all dragons — fear for his own life. Dragons are cowards at heart . . . but you must be very strong to bring this fear out." I mustn't encourage them, Nimodes thought. "Fear, however, will certainly be your problem."

"And why is that, mighty wizard?" sneered the leader.

Nimodes just looked back, refusing to be baited. "Most dragons project fear itself as an effect of having a magical metabolism. This is the dragonaura, a literal cloud of terror which surrounds the dragon when it wants to show itself in its glory. Some with special training, such as knights and paladins, can throw off this effect, and certain magical protections can also negate this terror-cloud."

"Yet even the dragonaura is pathetic compared to the most valuable and critical trait of dragons like Pyre — their cleverness, pure and simple. Pyre has lived a long and full life, and has learned every trick in the book. His lair will be filled with traps and perils, ready to be unleashed at a moment's notice.' A red dragon on the southern coast once located casks of alcohol so that they could be shattered with a swipe of his tail, sending alcohol down onto his cavern floor. One breath would have ignited the whole cavern in a fiery blast that would not have harmed the dragon greatly. He was a clever dragon."

"What happened to him?" asked the youth in the back.

Nimodes smiled and glanced at something on his wall. "Oh, the dragon ran into adventurers more clever than he."

The apprentice cleared his throat. "What can you tell us about what a red dragon eats and drinks?"

"Nothing that can be poisoned in a way that will affect the dragon, except perhaps in centuries. The red eats what it can catch and kill." As for drink, alcohol is its preference, though it will never become drunk. Water is taken in small doses, as living prey is moist enough for its needs. A dragon need not eat or drink during the time it sleeps, regardless of the time

involved, and it suffers little even from a loss of fresh air while asleep. One red dragon was buried by a rock and mud slide while asleep, only to awaken and dig its way out later in the year. When it does eat, the red dragon can consume twice its body weight before dragging itself off to digest the meal."

"And where will its greatest treasures be?" asked the brawny youth loudly, not liking to be left out of the conversation.

"Now, that depends on what you mean by treasures," said the sage. "Coins, of course, make up a red dragon's bed. Gems and other precious materials will be placed around its lair in highly visible locations, pleasing to the eye. Unlike the silver, the red dragon collects little art. Unlike the gold, it rarely shows a preference for gems, which the gold dragon eats. Unlike the vain brass, the red does not usually surround itself with reflective surfaces. Items used only by men, such as magical armor, are often placed at the back of the lair, to draw attackers in with their own greed. Knowing greed as well as a dragon does, it is no wonder it can use the same to trap its prey.

"Magical items are separated from their owners before the latter are devoured, and these items will most likely be in a side cave. These are trophies of the kill, and they are watched over and counted almost continuously. With red dragons, one faces the possibility that a hollow has been dug into the rock, the treasures placed within, and other rocks forced into place with the dragon's massive strength."

Nimodes sighed. "And that is all I know to tell you. If you have more money, I could research the topic in the library at the Castle Mardelaine, where—"

The leader cut him off. "That's enough, old man," he said with a wave of his hand. "We have what we need. Good day." He turned and forced his way through the group of youths around him, and they followed after him, muttering strategies among themselves. Nimodes watched them go, wondering if he should stop them. They were fools who had as much chance of killing Pyre with those swords and farm implements as they would with snowballs. He thought, then slowly released his grip on the arms of his chair. No, they would never listen. So be it. It was a waste.

Then he noticed the apprentice, who had stayed behind. The boy was staring at the object on the wall at which Nimodes had glanced earlier. "A trophy of sorts?" said the youth with interest.

A jagged yellow tooth was in a bottle on the shelf. A full five hands long, it came to a sharp carnivore's point. Nimodes looked at it and smiled faintly. "A relic of my adventuresome youth."

The apprentice laughed then. "Perhaps I'll bring you another — not now, but in time. I sense that I should study this adventure before us a while longer before we set out. If the others leave without me — well..." The boy sighed and shrugged.

"I wish them well, and they will be missed. But I want to do this right the first time. Good day, Nimodes, and my thanks."

Staring at the closed door a moment later, Nimodes was lost in thought. He had a feeling he would indeed see the apprentice again. He knew it in his bones.

Footnotes

1. Female red dragons, at the DM's option, may be harder to subdue than male ones. When attacking to subdue, take one and a half times the female dragon's hit-point total to calculate her effective hit-point value for subdual purposes. Thus, a 44-hp female red dragon effectively has 66 hp for purposes of subdual combat; if 33 hp subdual damage is inflicted on her, there is only a 50% chance that she will be subdued. Double her hit-point total for subdual purposes if the female red dragon is defending her young or eggs. Female red dragons will not listen to bribery, though flattery may impress them.

2. Like many dragons, red dragons shed their skins as they pass into each new life stage. Red dragons eat their old scaled skins, so as to gain certain nutrients from them. A very young red dragon is about 6' long; between its fifth and sixth years, it grows to 12', then gains another 12' in length for every stage of life thereafter. Thus, an adult red dragon is 48' long. The size differences of "small," "average," and "huge" refer to the dragon's body mass; a small dragon is thin and wirey, and a huge dragon is thick-bodied, muscular, or fat, with length remaining constant for all body types.

Red dragons of particularly advanced age (600 years old or more) suffer debilitating effects from their age. Their chances of sleeping increase by 10% per decade thereafter, with additional reductions of 1/2" per decade in the range of their ability to *detect hidden or invisible creatures*, and of 5' per decade in the range of their infravision. Dragons that are 700 years old or more have a 95% chance to be found sleeping, and have infravision to a range of 10'; they cannot *detect hidden or invisible creatures* except

within a range of 3". Their chances of death per decade after their 700th year are 5% per decade, cumulatively. Dragons that can cast spells suffer a 5% spell-failure penalty for every decade of age past their 600th year, to a 95% spell-failure maximum. For a few weeks prior to its death, a red dragon may become senile and insane, and is especially dangerous as it becomes so unpredictable.

3. Dragons of ancient age are disoriented when awakened from sleep. Allow a loss of initiative when appropriate for their response to an attack or confrontation if suddenly awakened. A dragon older than 600 years loses initiative for the round following its awakening and makes no attacks in the round it was awakened.

4. Female red dragons differ from males in their preferences. Females like to fight, first and foremost, and especially love to fight females of their own kind. They are even more territorial than males and less tolerant of other species. A male might be bribed to look the other way while a "morsel" escapes, while a female will take bribe and briber both. The female is also the aggressor in mating. It has happened that when young dragons leave their nest, the female becomes temporarily insane and slays the male. She then devours her former mate and any of the hatchlings which return. After fighting comes an interest in food, then in gold and treasures, the female liking reflective surfaces. Female red dragons have only a 15% chance to be caught sleeping.

5. A red dragon that has tasted someone's blood can track that person as can a ranger of a level equal to the dragon's age stage, using the information in *Unearthed Arcana*, page 21. Thus an adult red dragon has a 60% chance of tracking a wounded victim. Using smell, sight, and hearing alone, the dragon has one-half this chance of tracking someone that it has previously detected but not wounded.

6. Dragons value their sense of sight highly, even above their senses of smell and hearing. A blind dragon makes all attacks at -4 to hit and will retreat whenever possible from determined opposition.

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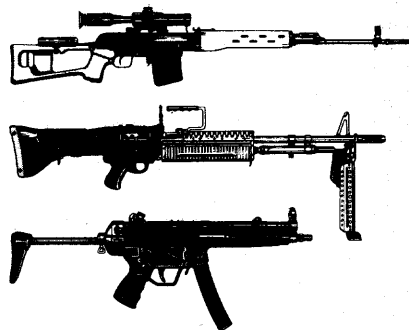
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If cornered, the dragon snaps at every sound and scent, but may be more than willing to bargain or plead for its life. Dragons without senses of smell or hearing are not affected in this manner. Dragons may be struck in their eyes only if attacked while sleeping. There is a 10% chance per level of the attacker that a blow aimed at a dragon's eyes will drive into the most sensitive part and not be turned aside by the tough eyelids (this chance rises to 20% per level of the attacker if he is a fighter or cavalier, or one of the subclasses thereof). At least 8 hp damage must be done to permanently blind the dragon in one eye; otherwise, the dragon is blinded for only 2-5 rounds, then has a -2 to hit for 5-10 days thereafter, then sees and fights normally.

7. Some dragons, notably the green, red, bronze, and white, swallow small stones and bits of metal which go into a small second stomach. This is similar to the gizzard of a bird, needed because these dragons are unable to chew food. These coins and other bric-a-brac aid digestion and are eventually left in waste products. Many dragon breeds, particularly the fastidious red, bury these wastes outside their lairs. Red dragon wastes, in addition to including small bits of metal, contain large amounts of sulfur and potassium nitrate. Thus, a sharp odor is a clue to the location of such a burial spot. To the surprise of many, the presence of sparks or fire, whether from a shovel striking a rock or from a dragon's fiery breath, causes these sites to suddenly explode with tremendous violence. Red dragons have used this physical property of their wastes as a secret weapon; they lure a group of attackers to either dig into a waste-pit or stand over it as the dragon breathes upon the ground. The explosion produced, as a rule of thumb, does half as many hit points of damage as the dragon's own normal hit points, or one-quarter of this amount if a saving throw vs. breath weapon is made. The radius of effect equals the dragon's hit points expressed in feet. Red dragons, given their tough hides and resistance to fire, take only one-quarter or one-eighth damage, depending on their saving throws if they are within the area of effect.

8. Since dragons are reluctant to discuss their dietary habits (beyond their threats to eat those who inquire into such matters), little information is available to PCs on this topic. Red dragons are, as everyone knows, carnivorous. Also, thanks to their magical metabolism, red dragons can go for prolonged periods without actually eating (this is how they can sleep for durations of 5-500 days). If awakened after a sleep lasting at least 30 days, a red dragon will do anything to get food before performing most other actions. Red dragons have a +4 bonus to their saving throws vs. poison and take only half damage from it (or lose half their normal hit-point maximum if a failure to save means death). Ω

SAGE ADVICE

by Skip Williams

If you have any questions on the games produced by TSR, Inc., write to:

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We return to the D&D® game system in this column, with bits of advice for D&D® game players and Dungeon Masters. Page references are for the most recent editions of the various rule books — 1983 and later unless specified otherwise.

Campaigns

What do you think of house rules?

House rules are fine — sometimes.

House rules are rotten at other times.

Here are some of the key rules about house rules:

1. Make sure they are really necessary.
2. Make sure everybody knows about them ahead of time.
3. Enforce them consistently. They should be written down and used just like the published rules.
4. Change them promptly when they don't work out.
5. Remember that your house rules go only with your "house." Don't assume that they are in effect when you play in another game, and never give another DM a hard time about not using them. No set of house rules is better than the published rules or another DM's house rules — they're just different.

My friends and I are starting in a new D&D® game campaign, but the only characters we have are from an old AD&D® game campaign. Can we just transfer these characters to the new campaign?

We don't recommend transferring AD&D® game characters to the D&D® game; create new D&D® game characters instead. The two game systems involved are only superficially alike.

Is it okay for a player to have more than one character in a campaign?

Many players have more than one character in a given campaign. This allows a choice of characters for any particular adventure, and it insures that the player has a character to play if one of his char-

acters gets involved in a prolonged adventure or project. Some DMs allow players to play more than one character at a time, but we recommend this when only a few people are playing; otherwise, it becomes too complicated to manage.

Characters

Is it possible for demi-humans to follow other classes after they have reached their maximum level? The notes in the demi-human section of the Companion Set *Players Companion* (page 29) seem to indicate that this is so.

Demi-humans never follow other classes. The notes that have you confused refer to the increased fighting abilities that demi-humans can gain after they have reached maximum level.

What are the "attack ranks" (A-M) noted in the *Players Companion*, pages 30-31?

"Attack Rank" refers to the column of the combat chart that the character may use. This allows demi-humans with extra experience to fight almost as well as fighters. The small letters (a-d) refer to other special abilities that demi-humans can get after reaching maximum level. These special abilities include multiple attacks per melee round and the other fighter combat options (*Players Companion*, page 18), and resistance to various attack forms. A careful rereading of the demi-humans section (*Players Companion*, pages 29-31) should clear up your confusion.

How long does lycanthropy take to set in? Can it be cured? Can a player character who is turned into a lycanthrope continue play?

Lycanthropy has an onset time of 2-24 (2d12) days, and until that time this magical disease is curable by a cleric of 11th or higher level. Once the change occurs, however, the afflicted character becomes a DM-controlled monster.

What happens when a cleric turns undead? Does the turning have a duration?

The undead run away from the cleric for one turn, then avoid the cleric for a full day, unless the cleric attacks them.

Other than for weapon mastery, what good are experience points

after a character has reached maximum level?

Weapon mastery requires money and time, not experience points. Experience earned after a character has reached maximum level has no effect on the game.

When druids fight for a level, does the loser drop to the next lower level?

Yes. The defeated druid loses a level, and he cannot challenge another druid until he has gained enough experience to regain the level.

Exactly how many druids are there at each level above 30?

Here are my (unofficial) suggestions:

Druid level	Number of druids
31	8
32	6
33	5
34	-3
35	2
36	1

I find the fighter options rules in the *Players Companion* unclear and contradictory. The options section sets conditions for use of these options, but the striking section seems to indicate that anybody can use the fighter options!

Fighter options can be used when striking (as explained in the *Players Companion*, page 6), but only when the fighter in question qualifies for the option in the first place (as explained on page 18).

How many spells does a 1st-level magic-user or elf have in his book? When can he add new spells? Does adding spells cost anything?

A 1st-level magic-user or elf has a book of two spells (see the Basic Set *Players Manual*, page 38, and the Basic Set *Dungeon Masters Rulebook*, page 19). A magic-user or elf can add spells to his books each time he gains a level. The spell added to the book will be the same level as the spell gained on the spell progression chart. For example, a 2nd-level magic-user gains a new first-level spell for his book, since he has gained the ability to memorize an additional first-level spell; a 3rd-level magic-user gains a second-level spell for his book, since he has gained the ability to memorize a second-level spell.

A magic-user or elf can also add spells to his books when he finds scrolls or other magic-users' books; see the "Sage Advice" for DRAGON® issue #129 for details.

Monsters

Is it possible to sever a slain medusa's head and use it to turn opponents to stone?

The hero Perseus did exactly that in

Greek mythology. I recommend that the head retain its power for not more than a day (and possibly less). Note that any treasure carried by a petrified character or creature also turns to stone and cannot be recovered until the victim is brought back. The DM might rule that the medusa's snakes will stay alive for a short time and will attack a character who tries to carry the head.

The rules say that if a victim of a medusa's gaze makes his Saving Throw vs. Turn to Stone, the medusa will petrify itself. Is this correct? If so, how is it possible? Are the snakes on a medusa's head poisonous?

The medusa's description in the Basic Set is missing text in the Basic Set *Dungeon Masters Rulebook*, page 34. When a victim makes a Saving Throw vs. Turn to Stone, there is no other effect. The only time a medusa can petrify herself is when she sees her reflection in a mirror. The medusa gets a Saving Throw vs. Turn to Stone against the reflected gaze. And a medusa's snakes are poisonous.

Why are normal bats more powerful than giant bats?

They are not; the statistics in the Basic Set *Dungeon Masters Rulebook*, page 25, were reversed.

What kind of special damage does a tiger beetle do?

None. The statistics for the tiger beetle and oil beetle were reversed in the Basic Set *Dungeon Masters Rulebook*, page 26.

How does wolfsbane affect lycanthropes?

Any lycanthrope struck by wolfsbane must make a Saving Throw vs. Poison or flee in fear. The wolfsbane can be used as a melee weapon or thrown at opponents. Lycanthropes driven away by wolfsbane will stay away unless pursued and attacked, or until the next moonrise.

Is there any way to restore the strength loss inflicted by shadows?

No, but it only lasts eight turns.

Will a rod of cancellation cancel the power of magical creatures such as gargoyles?

No.

I can't find a description of the devil swine anywhere. Was it left out of the books?

The devil swine appears on page 48 of the *Expert Rulebook*. The devil swine appears on page 30 of older editions of this text.

Can small rocs be used as mounts? How much weight can a roc carry? What class do rocs make Saving Throws as?

Rocs, being gigantic birds of prey, are difficult to train as mounts no matter what their size. While such training is possible, it would be *very* expensive. Humans and demi-humans can only tame the smallest rocs as mounts. Giants might have some success with the larger varieties. A small roc can carry 5,000 cn without hindrance, large rocs can carry 9,000 cn, and giant rocs can carry 18,000 cn. A roc can carry 1½ times its base load and still fly at half speed, but it must rest at least 20 minutes for every hour that it flies. A roc can carry up to twice its base load, but can only walk at half speed. A roc makes Saving Throws as a fighter of a level equal to the roc's hit dice. See the *Expert Rulebook*, page 55.

What is a war horse?

A war horse is a horse trained to carry a person into combat. Compared with common horses, they are courageous and aggressive. Statistics for war horses are given in the *Expert Rulebook*, page 51.

How lawful can an unintelligent repeater be? What magical properties do its teeth have, and how many teeth are there?

A repeater is an intelligent creature — thus its communication and power abilities. "How lawful is it?" is an irrelevant question. How lawful is a lawful character? It is sufficient to say that repeaters aren't the fanatics that archons are, since a repeater's alignment arises mostly from its association with the Sphere of Time.

Each repeater has 1d20 + 20 teeth; each tooth may be ground up and added to a potion (DM's option as to cost and time of manufacture). Each potion, when imbibed, allows the drinker to reflect power attacks just as a repeater does for one round. The potion lasts one turn, or until the reflection power is used. See the *DM's Guide to Immortals*, page 47.

Why is no experience-point value listed for the megalith? Do megaliths have treasure? Where do they keep it?

A creature's experience-point value is based on its hit dice. Since megaliths have almost infinite hit dice, this system doesn't work. PCs should get no experience for seeking out and destroying these planet-sized creatures. In scenarios that require PCs to combat and defeat megaliths, assign an experience value on a case-by-case basis. A megalith's treasure, if it has any at all, is located in its mantle. See the *DM's Guide to Immortals*, pages 42-43.

Magical items

What is the encumbrance of a spell book?

This is up to the DM, but 400 cn (back-pack size) is a good figure.

What does a DM do when the PCs get their hands on a magical item that is too powerful for them?

The DM has to contend with an out-of-balance campaign until the item leaves the game (by being destroyed, stolen, emptied of charges, or sold), or until the party gains enough experience to be on a par with the item.

What is a pocket of holding?

A *pocket of holding* is similar in design and function to a *bag of holding*. It is permanently attached to a garment and may not be removed without destroying both the *pocket* and the garment. The *pocket* can hold up to 10,000 cn, but it weighs only 600 cn when full. The largest item that can be placed in the pocket is 5' x 2' x 1'.

Can a high-level magic-user get increased effects from wands? For example, can a Wizard do more than 6-38 hp damage with a wand of cold? What about other magical items?

The user's level does not effect the function of any magical item unless the item's description specifically says it does.

How does a +1 weapon help a character? How does a ring of protection +1 help a character?

A +1 weapon gives the wielder a +1 bonus to hit and damage rolls. A *ring of protection* +1 gives the wearer a +1 bonus on all Saving Throws, and improves the wearer's armor class by one place.

The rules say that a bag of holding can hold an item up to 10' long. Is this right, or should this be 10"? Also, is there a rule against placing one bag of holding inside another?

The measurements for a *bag of holding* are in feet; *bags of holding* are very big inside. There is no official rule against putting a *bag of holding* inside another, but it is reasonable to assume that the extra-dimensional space contained in one *bag* will not fit inside another.

If a character actually gets younger after drinking a potion of longevity, does he also lose experience?

No. Although the drinker does get younger, he loses no experience.

Is there any way to avoid being trapped by a scroll of shelter?

Characters are trapped only if they are in the "room" when the scroll is taken down or falls down. The characters can simply step out of the "room" and take down the scroll any time before the scrolls 12-hour limit expires. If a monster appears and takes down the scroll, PCs in the "room" are trapped unless they get out before the scroll is taken down (*Dungeon Masters Companion*, pages 50-51).

Can the DM add creatures from the Masters Set to the egg of wonder?

The DM may add whatever creatures he likes to the list — including creatures from the Masters Set. We suggest, however, that you limit any additions to creatures with approximately the same hit dice or experience-point value as those already listed in the *Dungeon Master's Companion*, page 53.

Can an arrow of blinking blink past the enemy's first rank in order to strike spell-casters? Can it blink through a wall?

No, on both counts. A *missile of blinking* avoids creatures friendly to the shooter, thus allowing missile fire into melees. The missile does not negate the effects of cover or allow the shooter to fire at targets he can't see.

When you shoot a magical arrow or crossbow bolt, does it lose its magic?

Yes; firing the missile expends the magic.

Can any elf or magic-user use a crystal ball without instruction? If so, what is the chance for accuracy? Can a character use a crystal ball owned by another character?

All elves and magic-users know how to use *crystal balls*. A *crystal ball* always works when an elf or magic-user tries to use it, but the clarity of the image varies with how well the user knows the subject. If the subject is well known, the image is very clear and sharp, just as if the subject were standing on the other side of a window. If the user knows very little about the subject, the image will be faint and blurry. A *crystal ball* works only for its owner.

The Masters Set rules say that suit armor protects the wearer from most area attacks, including breath weapons. Does this include spells such as fireball and lightning bolt?

From *fireballs*, yes; from *lightning bolts*, no. Metallic armor offers no protection from electrical attacks. The armor protects the wearer from all other spells that produce nonelectrical energy.

Can player characters create intelligent swords or other magical items? If so, how?

Intelligent swords and other magical items are usually constructed by having a normal item of exceptionally high quality made, then enchanting it with *wish* spells. Several *wishes* are required to create even a simple magical item (see page 10 of the *Master Players' Book* for guidelines on *wishes*). When creating permanent magical items with *wishes*, a magic-user loses experience equal to the gold-piece price for the magical item (see the *Master DM's Book*, page 4, for prices). Ω

FORUM

(continued from page 6)

Many people who play AD&D® games think that the thief, assassin, and thief-acrobat should be mostly evil. What about Robin Hood, who stole from the rich and gave to the poor? I think that the rule stating that thieves should start off as evil and may progress into being good should be banned. Some thieves do not steal out of greed but out of hunger and survival. Players who say that they need to watch out whenever a thief is around don't know what they are talking about. I agree that some thieves need to have an eye kept on them, but that is the choice of the players, not the DM. If thieves are going to be continually thought of as greedy, I think it is the same as saying that a fighter should be watched so he won't kill someone in the party.

Greg Pierson
Baton Rouge LA

Bryan Caplan's article in issue #129, "Who's in charge here?" presented a simple and effective method for determining the special characters in a group. We have used a similar system in the campaign in which I play (twice as many 1st levels as 2nd levels, twice as many 2nd levels as 3rd levels, etc.) and have found that the trend can be continued almost indefinitely, leading to a reasonable, well-balanced world. For example, there would be one 9th-level fighter per 2,000 human men, one 10th-level fighter per 5,000, and so on. This leads to one 20th-level fighter, one 19th-level cleric, one 19th-level thief, and one 19th-level magic-user per 10 million men. When raising a level requires combat, the next higher level is ten times rarer instead of twice, unless otherwise specified. Thus, if there were one 13th-level assassin per 500,000 men, there would be one 14th-level assassin per 5 million men and one Grandfather of Assassins per 50 million men.

We have referred to this scheme in all areas of our campaign. The most powerful knight in a kingdom with a million men would be about 17th level, and the most powerful cleric of a deity with 100 million worshipers (throughout the Prime Material plane) would be about 22nd level. As a reference, the Earth had 100 million people in 1000 A.D., and 300 million in 1600 A.D. Thus, an AD&D® game world might have around 200 million humans, dwarves, orcs, and others. A world with only one 18th-level magic-user would not be very rare.

I hope some of these ideas will help other DMs when playing Arch-Mages and similar rare characters, as well as in deciding how hard Joe Fighter has to search to find a 17th-level cleric willing to heal his clay-golem wounds!

Steve Kommrusch
Cambridge MA

I write in response to an article by John Prager in issue #129. Perhaps it is better to say that I respond in horror to the article, which provides information for "hopping up" demi-human ability scores at the time of character generation. His reasons for this include the existence of the human's table for the same purpose in *Unearthed Arcana* (which allows for much more power to human PCs), the demi-human's ability to progress to the upper reaches in the few classes they are permitted, and the demi-human's unfair inability to specify a cho-

sen class prior to ability generation.

Well, perhaps I am a player/DM of the old school, outmoded by hordes of gung-ho campaigners. I feel that the curve of progression will soon have all player characters and most NPCs wandering around with incredibly high scores and commensurately incredible abilities, even at 1st level. Is this practice to continue unchecked?

Many of my players and I enjoy playing characters without extraordinary abilities, because it is not only conducive to good role-playing but is more of a power-balancing philosophy. But many novice players are doubtless convinced by material [like Prager's article] to sneak out of role-playing any character with less than five 18 ability scores. True, playing such is great fun for a time. But with the introduction of zero-level characters (something I personally enjoy) being billed as your average townsfolk, able to be developed as chosen by the players — well, I'd like to avoid the town where the "average" human or demi-human conforms to the standards put forth in the tables in issue #129.

Perhaps times have changed since last I went to conventions, but I'm sure many experienced gamers feel the way I do, and have noticed the new players who never came back that second time because "the evil, cruel DM-thing took away all our magic but our short sword +2, even if we are double specialized and have a 2nd-level ranger with 18 strength."

Each day, I am convinced to allow more and more new ideas into the campaign, which is good (change denoting creative thought), but each change seems to somehow benefit PCs, regardless of race, class, or abilities.

David Poythress
Kansas City MO

In issue #130, Brent Silvis asked how he should handle characters who catch lycanthropy, but who want to be free of its curse. He seemed to think that once a person had the curse, he would not want to be free of it, so the DM is forced to resort to all sorts of strange methods to free the PC from the curse.

I feel, however, that this is unnecessary. While it is true that *eventually* a lycanthrope will not want to be "cured" of the curse, at first there will be no noticeable change in the PC's temperament or alignment while in human form. While the physical changes happen almost at once, the mental changes take far longer. The terrible pity of such stories is created not just because a man turns into a ravaging beast, but because he regrets the change. In all the classic werewolf films, the hero is filled with horror when he realizes what has happened to him.

It is with the passage of time that these feelings of horror fade as the character's mind changes to accept the physical changes. One of the best examples of these changing attitudes is the unnamed narrator of Lovecraft's "The Shadow Over Innsmouth," whose horror at his transformation slowly turns into delight at his new-found powers. So, too, would a PC react if he discovered he was a lycanthrope. At first there would be horror and revulsion at the terrors he inflicts on the innocent, but as time passed he would come to accept the new state as something wonderful, making him superior to common man. During the earlier time, however, a character could seek treatment. The DM should set a time limit in which the character must act in order to gain help; otherwise he will resist such help to the best of his abilities.

Furthermore, by having a needy character seek out a temple for help, he could be exposing

himself and his group to the world of church politics. Instead of taking gold as payment for the antilycanthropy treatment, a cleric might ask a healed character to perform some sort of quest for his church, which could lead to all sorts of adventures as the one-time lycanthrope falls afoul of the enemies of the church he is serving.

Paul Astle
Larchmont NY

In the argument about harpies [in issues 115, 121, 125, 130, and 131], the word "genetics" occurs very frequently. In a world in which humans can mate with demons, and ogres and orcs produce young, the laws of genetics are going to be changed, if they aren't nonexistent. Where do baby harpies come from? They come from eggs, of course. A harpy lays an egg, which hatches and grows into a bigger harpy. People in primitive societies, magical or not, do not know anything about reproduction, let alone genetics. Remember that the populace of the fantasy world of AD&D games does not have electron microscopes or lab equipment of any sort more complex than magnifying lenses. All of those sages who argue about harpies seem to have an awful lot of modern knowledge, something that exists in 1988 Earth but not in the far-away lands of fantasy. Harpies could very well come from meteorites or from trees, for all I care. In my campaign, matter isn't even composed of atoms.

Lucas McNeill
Shutesbury MA

When I wrote the article "Surely, You Joust!" in issue #118, *Oriental Adventures* had just come out, but the two AD&D game Survival Guide rule books were yet to be published. Using the proficiency system in *Oriental Adventures*, I based a type of save vs. unhorsing roll in the joust on the horsemanship proficiency described on page 54 of the book. With the publication of the two Survival Guides and their more sophisticated proficiency system, I hoped the riding proficiencies described therein could be used as the best way to decide whether a knight hit in the joust would be unhorsed or not. Alas, I couldn't reconcile myself to the idea that the knight's save vs. unhorsing roll would be a form of Wisdom Check.

To accommodate the riding proficiencies with the needs of jousting combat and to make the riding proficiencies a bit more realistic, I suggest the following changes: Each riding proficiency should be divided into two separate rolls based on either wisdom or dexterity. The revised riding proficiencies are given here in the accompanying table.

Common sense should dictate which appropriate ability would be used in a given situation. When a rider needs to roll a proficiency check in order to control his mount, or to urge the mount on to do something the mount normally wouldn't want to do (such as leap over a chasm or move at a greater speed), then wisdom is the appropriate ability. If the question to be decided is whether the rider remains in the saddle or

falls or gets knocked off his mount, then the appropriate ability is dexterity. All female characters gain a -1 die-roll modifier to their dexterity rolls, because of their lower center of gravity compared to males. When a character spends an additional proficiency slot to improve his riding proficiency, both the wisdom and dexterity proficiency checks improve by -2.

To reflect the great power of the lance charge in jousting combat, an additional die-roll modifier must be applied to the dexterity proficiency check. Cavaliers must make their proficiency checks with a +5 penalty applied to the roll. All other fighters with experience in jousting combat have a +7 penalty applied to their proficiency checks. Whether paladins receive a +5 or +7 modifier depends on whether the Dungeon Master considers the paladin to be a cavalier subclass or merely a fighter subclass (and if the paladin has jousting experience, of course).

All other characters with riding proficiency but no experience in jousting make their proficiency checks at +10 to the rolls. Characters without riding proficiency are automatically unhorsed by a lance charge, with no Proficiency Check or saving throw allowed.

If the system described here is used, then the various modifiers on pages 24-5 of "Surely, You Joust!" are ignored and the DM needn't bother with the complexity of the APU and DBU business. I consider the method for handling unhorsing in the joust described above to be superior to the system in "Surely, You Joust!" both because of its greater simplicity and because it takes advantage of the existing riding proficiency.

S.D. Anderson, of Whittier, Calif., and I have had an interesting correspondence on the question of whether a mounted character with his feet planted firmly in the stirrups is entitled to an armor-class bonus for high dexterity. After all, a mounted character does not have much freedom to bob and weave to avoid attacks. After a bit of thought, I decided to allow a character in my campaign to retain his dexterity bonus to armor class, provided that: a) the character has riding proficiency with the mount, where skilled control of the mount makes up for the rider's loss of mobility; and b) the mount is a fairly quick and agile one, such as a well-trained pegasus, unicorn, or war horse of quality, but not a slow and unwieldy mount such as a mule, camel, or elephant.

By the phrase "well-trained war horse of quality," I mean a horse of fine breeding that has received much training in the art of mounted combat. If you use the excellent system described in Robert Harrison's "Let the Horse Buyer Beware" article of issue #92, only a horse of "excellent" or "superb" quality that has received the full course in "combat" training will enable the rider to retain his armor-class bonus while mounted. Any lesser horse simply won't do. So, if a character wants to retain his dexterity bonus to armor class while mounted, the character will have to spend a pretty penny on his horse for the privilege.

Len Carpenter
West Chester PA

Proficiency	Slots required	Appropriate ability	Die-roll modifier
Riding, airborne	2	Wisdom	+2
		Dexterity	+3
Riding, land-based	1	Wisdom	-3
		Dexterity	+1

One of the bigger pains in the AD&D game is dealing with the players of silly characters in a serious adventure/game world. These players have their characters relabel other characters' potions because it might be fun (they apparently can't distinguish between being a rugged individual and being a lunatic) or rationalize game-disrupting action because an intelligence or wisdom stat is low: "The five flasks of flaming oil have made the brown mold bigger." "Duh . . . I throw more oil on the mold. It can't ignore that kind of damage forever."

The fact is, something has to be done about the main weapon used by the characters of such players: the *wand of wonder!* Last night, I ran a game which included a PITA (pain in the, umm, arteries) character who created great havoc with such a wand until another PC charmed him and forced him to break his own wand (to the applause of every player in the game except the PITA).

The problem with these wands is that there really isn't any effect that hurts the wielder. The character might be deluded for a whole minute that the wand did something else, or be blinded (with everyone else in the area) by a swarm of conjured butterflies, but unless he is in an enclosed area when the wand lets loose a *fireball*, the person with the wand is reasonably safe. The rest of the party is at risk. This is why PITAs use and abuse this item in the ways they do.

Basically, I'd like to make a modification to the wand, one that would expose the wielder to a bit of danger. It also is quite in keeping with the random-effects nature of the item: Roll 1d12 before checking the effect of the wand. On a roll of 1, the wand backfires and instead affects the person holding it. The odds favor the wand functioning (ab)normally, but the risk of being turned into a statue ought to keep the idiots from using the wand first, last, and always, giving legitimate players a chance for success and survival.

S.D. Anderson
Whittier CA

The articles on the fighter class in issue #127 were much appreciated. However, there continues to be little discussion on how to role-play a fighter in the current AD&D game system and to what goal. What follows is my opinion on how to make the fighter a more interesting role.

I have always preferred the fighter class ever since I began playing D&D games in May 1976. This preference is based on the traditional heroic concept of the warrior as the defender or champion of his people or society. In the myths and tales based on this concept, the priest and wizard were sources of advice or treacherous opponents, and the thief was at best an annoyance or the warrior's companion. However, it was the warrior who was regarded as the leader.

As originally established, the fighter could be role-played as anything: knight, barbarian, scout, mercenary, etc. However, the fighter class had only one skill: weapon use. It was not surprising that players eventually preferred clerics, magic-users and thieves, with a broad variety of skills. In reaction, there developed the split classes and the fighter subclasses of cavalier/paladin, berserker, ranger, bard, and barbarian, each with their special capabilities that made them as fun to play as the other classes. This development has resulted in the fighter class itself being even less desirable.

There are two solutions to help the fighter. One is to not permit the fighter subclasses in

the campaign, placing the role of cavalier, ranger, or barbarian in the imagination and not the rules. The other is to find a role for the fighter, given its subclasses. If the subclasses are used, the role of feudal lord or knight errant is filled by the cavalier, the savage outsider by the barbarian, and the wanderer in the wild by the ranger. The remaining roles that a "generic" fighter can fill are those of soldier or thug.

The role of thug is basically the use of the fighter as a strong-arm thief. The fighter class doesn't need any embellishment to be played in this role. It could be argued that this is how most fighters are role-played anyway.

The soldier role is more complex. It relates to leading the military forces in the service of a state or potentate. The other fighter subclasses are unsuitable for this task. A cavalier would lose status by associating with mere troops, a barbarian would prefer to raise a horde of his own people, a ranger would rather be alone in the woods, and a split-classed character has the other profession to spend time on. The fighter is the class that has the inclination, expertise, and opportunity to raise and lead military forces. It is a role that fits the class.

In order to fill this role, the fighter needs to have skills based on his charisma, intelligence, wisdom, and experience. One skill is leadership, which is the most difficult to define but is necessary to unify a group to a common purpose. Knowledge of that, and an ability to train soldiers in weapon handling and battle drill, are necessary, as these are the foundation of a unit's quality. Additionally, there are other military skills, such as engineering to build and take fortifications, the matter of arming and supplying, strategy and tactics, etc. that could be assigned to the fighter class.

The *DMG* ties the number of troops NPC hirelings can command to their level. This is also a good rule of thumb for PC fighters. It is not necessary for the PC to control all the troops he possibly can. If the PC prefers, he can remain a small-unit leader. However, a PC should not be able to jump from being a leader of 10 men to being a marshal of 10 field armies overnight. After all, no ruler is going to entrust such a force to someone with no experience in or reputation for leading large bodies of troops. The progression from small commands to large should be based on successes, not the level of the fighter.

The quality of a unit depends on its leadership, equipment, and the time spent on and rigor of the training. DMs can initially adjust the morale and skill of the commanded troops based on the charisma, intelligence, and wisdom of the leader PC, and the amount of time spent on training. Further adjustment can be based on the successes and failures the PC encounters in completing the assigned missions, and the number of casualties taken in doing so. DMs should remember that success justifies the sacrifices made by the troops. Failure exacerbates the impact of deaths and wounds.

In poor quality units, each soldier will fight as an individual and the unit's cohesion will breakdown under stress. High-quality units will fight as a group with each individual supporting the others. Fighting as a unit, the impact of each individual soldier will be as if he were a higher level. Also, well-trained or experienced men-at-arms should not be treated as zero-levels. These men-at-arms have the skill to defend themselves. I would suggest that men-at-arms trained by a fighter should be considered 1st level for melee and saving throws.

Many possible scenarios for a soldier player character would fit nicely into a wilderness

campaign. Border patrols, scouting, route reconnaissance, raiding parties, etc. can lead to some interesting situations. For example, a general is considering sending his army through a mountain pass; the PC could be assigned to determine if it is possible to move wagons through it, and also check out rumors of an abandoned castle. Or the PC could be sent into orc territory to bring back a couple of prisoners for interrogation, to determine where the orc tribes are going to raid this summer. In an underworld setting, the fighter could be assigned to clear a particular section of a dungeon. Instead of providing a room-by-room kick-in-the-door and trash-the-occupants scenario, the DM should provide a sustained struggle with opponents who are very resentful that their particular home is being trespassed. Regardless of the setting, the DM should award experience points on how well the fighter soldiered and led; e.g., did he properly train and supply his troops for the mission, complete the mission, keep losses to a minimum, recognize the opposition was too stiff in time to cut losses and extricate his command, etc.

Gregory D. Scott
Ocean NJ

Recently there seems to have been a flood of correspondence revolving around the topic of illusions and illusionists. This correspondence has apparently culminated into two articles: "Hold On to Your Illusions" by Brian Tillotson in issue #130, and "Illusory Solutions" by Matt Battison in issue #131.

I must admit that both articles are appropriately titled. "Hold On to Your Illusions" gives excellent advice on controlling illusions and adding to the balance of play, not to mention adding to the spirit of the game. "Illusory Solutions" is just that. You are fooling yourself if you think it is a solution. Brian Tillotson should be congratulated on the method of saving throws that he has suggested. The article gives an objective but concerned view of a sometimes touchy subject. Mr. Tillotson's suggestions have a balance to them that the original authors of the AD&D game could truly appreciate. "Illusory Solutions," on the other hand, allows an average of +4 to +9 saving throws against all illusions! That should put most players (if not all) off from considering playing an illusionist character, as well as causing a series of violent reactions from illusionist PCs. Also, despite Mr. Battison's argument, his system is cumbersome and slow. This is not something that the already taxed DM needs to contend with.

I get the impression that Mr. Battison *heavily* favors and probably plays a magic-user. The observation comes from his use of spell comparisons. There is a significant difference between a real dragon and an *illusory* dragon. A magic-user will always dominate over the illusionist.

Even with my objections, I must admit that Mr. Battison does touch on some valid points. On the issue of illusory fireballs, how does the target know that it is a 30-HD *fireball*? It is obvious what the abilities of an ancient red dragon are, but a *fireball* does not come with a tag that states how much damage it will do. Therefore, it seems logical to limit the amount of *illusory* damage done so that it does not exceed the ability of the illusionist (i.e., an 8th-level illusionist can do a maximum of 8d6 points of damage).

Michael Anderson
Kennesaw GA

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Bazaar of the Bizarre

Illustration by Jim Holloway



The jester NPC class appeared in DRAGON® issue #60 and was reprinted in the Best of DRAGON® Magazine Anthology, volume IV, pages 21-23. Magical items for jesters are often quite unpredictable, as is only fitting. Unfortunately (at least from the jester's point of view), these items are also quite rare, typically being in the possession of other high-level jesters or in the private collections of the rich and powerful. The DM should see to it that the powers of such items, especially such items as the *paddleboard of wondrous transformation* or *blowgun of wild emotions*, are kept secret. The DM can also come up with his own ideas for weird magical items, but all such items should be introduced only for everyone's enjoyment.

Blowgun of wild emotions

This item is a blowgun $3\frac{1}{2}$ in length, made of a light, strong, blue metal similar to mithral. At unpredictable times the metal changes color, sometimes glowing or even growing fur or scales. None of these changes affect the powers of the blowgun. Its range is normal for a blowgun, as per *Unearthed Arcana*, page 28. Only seven such blowguns exist.

Any dart fired from one of these blowguns is briefly enchanted to cause emotional changes in the creature struck by it. When a creature is hit by such a dart, roll on the following chart for the dart's effect:

1d100	Effect
1-10	Envy
11-20	Greed
21-30	Pride
31-40	Hatred
41-50	Paranoia
51-60	Love
61-70	Sloth
71-80	Euphoria
81-90	Sadness
91-00	Lust

This item affects any being with an intelligence of 5 or greater who fails a saving throw vs. spells after being struck. Darts fired from this blowgun do no physical damage. A jester is automatically proficient in the use of this (and only this) blowgun. Only one dart may be fired per round, and only one emotion can affect a being at any one time. The duration of effect of these emotions is one turn. PCs struck by these darts should be roleplayed to an extreme; while these emotional effects have no real game effect, they can create remarkable role-playing situations. Anyone other than a jester who uses this item finds that it functions as a normal blowgun.

XP Value: 100

GP Value: 500

Exalted book of ethnic humor

This 9" X 12" tome is leatherbound and appears to be quite thin. It is a magical study of insulting comments and gestures that a jester can make toward all known

Magical items for a less-than-serious NPC

intelligent races and creatures. The jester need merely state the race that he wishes to insult and open the book to receive the information. The jester using this item must fluently speak the creature's language (or a mutually known one) in order to properly insult it. The insulted creature must save vs. spells or else have a 90% chance of being filled with magical *shame*, causing the creature to flee and hide for 2-12 rounds. There is a 10% chance that the taunting *enrages* any listener of the appropriate species, causing it to chase the jester regardless of other circumstances in an attempt to attack the jester in hand-to-hand combat. The *enraged* victim makes all attacks and saving throws at -2 from his blind, all-consuming rage. Only a jester may read and understand this book.

XP Value: 250

GP Value: 1,250

Extendable band of enjoyment

This device is an iron rod 18" in length with a hand mounted on the end. The hand is wrapped in leather and feels warm. The hand is also jointed as a normal hand, and can grasp objects like a normal hand with 18 (nonpercentile) strength upon mental command, so long as it is held by a jester. In addition, the rod can extend up to 30' at the jester's mental command, without gaining any weight. The jester can mentally create two different joints (or elbows as it were) in the rod wherever he wishes. The extendable hand can be used to *pick pockets* at the same chances for success as the jester using it has, but it cannot catch hurled objects.

XP Value: 300

GP Value: 1,500

Larynx of deafening

This item appears as a small patch of leatherlike material, approximately 2" X 4". When placed against the throat of a jester, it adheres to his skin and magically blends so as to be indistinguishable from the jester's throat. A jester with this magical larynx attached is able to yell at incredible volume. Furthermore, the yell is both audible and understandable at up to three miles distance. Anyone within an enclosed space 100' across or less who hears this shout (with no solid interposing barriers) must save vs. spells or be deafened for 3-30 turns; the jester is immune to this effect. The larynx is removable.

XP Value: 250

GP Value: 1,250

Magical paddleboards

Although magical paddleboards come in a variety of types, all look like normal paddleboards. Such a paddle is 1' long and made of wood, thus being quite susceptible to fire damage but never from impact damage (such as from falling, or normal or crushing blows). The string appears to be made from interwoven sinews, and the paddleball is usually an opaque crystal that is resilient and nearly indestructible.

Table 1
Paddleboard Table

1d100	Paddleboard	Range	Restrictions
1-60	+1	5'	—
61-75	+2	10'	—
76-83	+3	15'	Usable by jesters of 3rd level and above
84-90	+4	20'	Usable by jesters of 6th level and above
91-95	+5	20'	Usable by jesters of 9th level and above
96-99	+5	25'	Usable by jesters of 11th level and above
00	+6	30'	Usable by jesters of 13th level and above

Only jesters may use these items. When a magical paddleboard is found, roll upon the Paddleboard Table to determine its powers.

Magical paddleboards can be used to batter opponents up to three times per round, using either the paddle or the ball. The damage caused per hit equals 1 hp plus the magical bonus of the paddleboard and the jester's strength bonus, if any. These items can become quite deadly in the right hands! Once per round, a jester can attempt to stun a human, demi-human, or humanoid foe with his paddleboard or paddleball. The base chance for success if a hit is made is 5%, modified by +2% for every magical plus of the weapon and +1% per jester level.

The sinew thongs are normally 1' long, lengthening magically to their full range during use. The range given for each paddleboard cannot be exceeded by any means, and paddleboard strings are impossible to cut.

Paddleboard type	XP value	GP value
+1	50	250
+2	100	500
+3	150	750
+4	200	1,000
+5 (20')	275	1,375
+5 (25')	290	1,450
+6	300	1,500

Paddleboard of wondrous transformation

This paddleboard appears much the same as other magical paddleboards, but it holds much more power. Sometimes it will have the form of an animal or monster carved on the back of the paddle. The *paddleboard of wondrous transformation* may strike once per round at a range of up to 15', its sinew cord stretching in the same manner as other magical paddleboards. When struck, a target creature takes no damage but must save vs. *polymorph* or else be *polymorphed* into a new

being of some sort for a duration of six turns. All items the victim possesses are *polymorphed* into that shape as well. The affected being (if the new form allows) retains all spell-casting and fighting powers, and undergoes no change in personality, knowledge, or intelligence. No innate powers of the new form are gained, except for those normally gained by the use of a *polymorph self* spell. This paddleboard is a dangerous weapon, for it is impossible to predict what shape the affected creature will assume. When a creature is struck, consult the Paddleboard of Wondrous Transformations Table.

A particular creature may be *polymorphed* only once per day. No system-shock roll need be made by the victim. In some forms, all the victim's previous powers are lost for the duration of the transformation; for instance, even a 20th. level mage is nearly helpless as a rot grub, having no hands, mouth, or components with which to cast spells.

It goes without saying that the *paddleboard of wondrous transformation* is not always a wise weapon to use. Turning your opponent into a purple worm during a bar fight is considered bad form by the other patrons. This is a weapon that works only in the hands of a jester.

XP Value: 3,000

GP Value: 15,000

Random-target daggers

These normal, if somewhat exquisite, throwing daggers are +2 to hit and damage, and function normally if used in hand. There is a catch: If thrown, the daggers pick their own targets. Whenever thrown, everyone within a range of 3" (including the jester) is counted as a potential target, up to a maximum of the 20 closest creatures. An appropriate die is then rolled to randomly determine the target. The usual steps for "to hit" determination are then followed. To most people, these daggers would seem evil or cursed, but they are weapons which jesters love in

Table 2
Paddleboard of Wondrous Transformations Table

1d100	Creature	1d100	Creature
1-2	Piercer	51-53	Elf
3-4	Leucrotta	54-55	Otyugh
5-6	Wight	56-58	Halfling
7-8	Purple worm	59-60	Hill giant
9-10	Iron golem	61-62	Rust monster
11-12	Orc	63-64	Lich
13-14	Giant centipede	65-66	Giant weasel
15-16	Blink dog	67-68	Minotaur
17-18	Hydra (eight-headed)	69-70	Troll
19-20	Frost giant	71-72	Type III demon
21-22	Will-o-wisp	73-74	Umber hulk
23-24	Catoblepas	75-76	Vampire
25-26	Giant fire beetle	77-78	Carrion crawler
27-28	Subterranean lizard	79-80	Black pudding
29-30	Nightmare	81-82	Rot grub
31-32	Copper dragon	83-84	Storm giant
33-34	Bronze dragon	85-86	Troglodyte
35-36	Elder titan	87-88	Anhkheg
37-38	Lizard man	89-90	Brown mold
39-40	G a r g o y l e	91-92	Gorgon
41-42	Giant poisonous snake	93-94	Beholder
43-44	Giant slug	95-96	Medusa
45-46	Ki-rin	97-98	Mind flayer
47-48	Ogre	99	Skeleton
49-50	Shadow	00	DM's choice

their own mischievous ways. Random *target daggers* are usually found in groups of three.

XP Value: 200 each

GP Value: 1,000 each

Playthings of the Roller Hoopers

These objects have been handed down through the generations for hundreds of years. They are a pair of roller skates and a hula hoop, both hot pink in color. If found, the DM should describe these objects without giving away their true titles or functions, as adventurers don't know what these objects are. Both items are unique.

Skates of the Roller Hoopers

Any jester wearing these skates can move at a rate of 24" over any surface (water, mud, stairs going down, etc.) — even over walls or ceilings. When doing so, a strange, soft sound may be heard — one that resembles the purring of a giant cat (it's the whirring of the skates). These function as normal skates for anyone else.

XP Value: 3,000

GP Value: 15,000

Hula-hoop of the Roller Hoopers

Once this hula-hoop is set in motion, it can only be stopped by the jester using it. The hula-hoop cannot be grasped, and it has AC -2 and 35 hp if it is attacked by an opponent of the jester using that hoop. The hoop unerringly deflects incoming missiles as if the jester had a *protection from normal missiles* spell cast upon him. Additionally, the hoop blocks 10 hp of

magic missiles cast against the jester per round, and reduces all damages from giant-hurled boulders and seige-engine missiles by half if they strike the jester. Damage-causing spells with areas of effect (like *fireballs*) can penetrate the hoop's defense to harm the jester, but even their damage is reduced by 1 hp per die of damage. Harmful gases are dispelled within 5' of the jester using this hoop. When the hoop performs these functions, it moves so fast as to become a blur. In addition to these powers, the hoop also deflects an opponent's handheld weapons to such a degree that the hoop is the equal of *bracers of defense* AC 2 in effect.

If both the skates and hula-hoop are owned, the combined effect of using these two objects is to add another +1 to the jester's initiative die roll.

XP Value: 6,000

GP Value: 30,000

Tome of the fool

In the hands of anyone but a jester, this book is a 9" X 12" leatherbound book of approximately 100 pages. In the hands of a jester, the *tome of the fool* radiates a hot-pink glow that is visible for up to 100 yards around.

By careful study of this tome over one month, a jester may gain enough experience points to place him at the midpoint of the next level of experience. The tome works only once before disappearing, and that jester may never again utilize any tome of this sort. Any person other than a jester who reads this book immediately becomes a jester of 1st level (no saving

throw allowed).

XP Value: 8,000

GP Value: 40,000

Tome of the humorous perspective

This book looks exactly the same as the *tome of the fool*, and it is usable only by jesters. Like the *tome of the fool*, anyone who is not a jester and who reads it immediately becomes a 1st-level jester.

When read, this book enables a jester to attain a different outlook on things — one in which death and other morbid topics are merely punch lines in the great game of life. The jester, because of his calm control of the situation, receives an extra +10% modifier to his morale-changing ability (special ability #6 in the description of the jester NPC class in the Best of DRAGON® Magazine Anthology). The same jester may cast *friends* and *charm person* once per day in addition to his normal spell-casting abilities. Finally, the reader of this tome is forever immune to emotion-changing spells involving fear, hate, despair, discord, hopelessness, and rage, as received from *symbols* or *emotion* spells.

XP Value: 4,000

GP Value: 20,000

Yo-yo of fate

This yo-yo looks like a normal yo-yo of a bright cherry-red color whose string glows faint yellow. This magical yo-yo adds a +1 to all of a jester's saving throws and +2% to all normal jester abilities when carried by that jester. Most of the time, it functions as a normal yo-yo. However, when the jester desires, the yo-yo allows its owner to alter fate during the course of a day. A particular 1d20 die roll, made for that jester's combat or saving-throw purposes, is chosen and altered (but only before the roll is made). The jester then uses his yo-yo to "get lucky." When used to alter fate, the yo-yo's string permanently shortens by 1" for every +1 bonus added to the die roll to be altered. Note that the *yo-yo of fate* does not guarantee that a die roll will succeed; it merely adds to the chance involved. The yo-yos come with strings of various lengths. When such a yo-yo is found, roll on this chart:

1d100	String length
1-60	3"
61-80	5"
81-90	9"
91-95	13"
96-98	17"
99-00	20"

If such a yo-yo's string is too short to permit the size of the die-roll bonus asked for (e.g., a 2" string cannot allow a +5 bonus on a die roll), then the yo-yo grants the maximum bonus it can allow (in the above case, a +2 bonus) and vanishes forever. No jester can use or own more than one such yo-yo at a time.

GP Value: 6,000 per inch

XP Value: 500 per inch

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For Your Orcs Only



Illustration by Jim Holloway

Errata, clarifications, and more for the ORCWARS! game

The ORCWARS! board game that we ran in issue #132 of DRAGON® Magazine was extremely popular. We received a few letters in subsequent weeks with rules questions, and so we had the game's orc-happy designer answer them.

Can hordes fight in or occupy a territory without a chief?

Yes; see rule sections 8 and 9. Hordes can be left in a territory by their chief to defend the territory against invasions. Also, if hordes rebelled at the time of levy and defeated the levying chief, they remain in their territory; they are neutral (under no players' control). Uncommanded

hordes (neutral or not) cannot move but can defend themselves when attacked.

Can hordes without a chief remain with their coalition and thus retain control over territories for their coalition?

Yes; see section 7 and the description of tribal coalition markers in section 1. To remember which uncommanded hordes belong to which coalition, use the tribal coalition markers. Uncommanded hordes without a tribal coalition marker are neutrals. Empty territories remain under a tribal coalition's control as long as a chief does not claim it or an army does not capture it. Leave tribal coalition markers in your empty territories after you gain control of them.

How does the Code of Ethnicity (section 15) apply to combat when one side is without a chief?

See section 7, case 1. Uncommanded hordes (neutral or not) automatically join a chief of the same race.

How can uncommanded hordes retreat after combat?

See section 15, under the "R" (Retreat) entry. Uncommanded hordes (neutral or not) are automatically destroyed on a "retreat" result.

Can uncommanded hordes mine for their coalition?

Yes; see section 18. Chiefs are not needed for mining. Neutral hordes can mine, and their gold is then placed on the map.

Can chiefs of the same coalition exchange hordes?

Yes. Suppose Chief A leaves uncommanded hordes in a territory. Chief B could then take over these uncommanded troops, as per section 8's last paragraph. Neither chief A or B actually need to move at all to accomplish this; there is no rule against that. Watch out, though! If these uncommanded hordes are of a different race and the new chief fails his Authority Check, they immediately become neutral and attack him (and the other chief, if still present; see section 12).

When can a chief pick up uncommanded hordes?

He can do so at any time during his turn, when in the presence of uncommanded hordes. This applies before or after movement, or even after retreat!

If an army is forced to retreat into a space outside the Broken Lands, does this army roll an Authority Check? Should the army make a second such check on that turn if it began the turn out there?

No. I don't understand where you have the idea that armies must make an Authority Check when entering outside nations. Perhaps you are confused about the "Orcs on a Rampage" rule (section 21). The rule says: "Each time an army raids foreign lands, its chief must make an Authority Check." The player decides whether or not to raid a foreign land. Entering a foreign land, voluntarily or not, does not automatically mean it is *raided*. Collecting gold on a rampage occurs only on the player's phase B7 — that is, after his movement and combat have been completed..

Do hordes receive a gold counter from rampaging a territory into which they have retreated?

No; see section 21. Collecting gold from orcs on a rampage only occurs on a player's phase B7. If the player's army retreats after being attacked during someone else's turn, the retreating player cannot collect any gold.

If a caravan is attacked outside the Broken Lands and the chief is the only survivor, what happens to the remaining gold?

It is lost.

Can war machines be lost by the larger army on a "X" result to balance the smaller army's loss?

Yes, but only if they were used in an attack. War machines cannot be used defensively; see section 13. In this case, if the smaller army was actually the attacker, the larger army would not have been able to use its war machines, and could not sacrifice them to cover exchange losses.

Can an army retreat into a territory controlled by its own coalition?

Yes. The rules allow retreat only into empty areas. Areas controlled by the retreating army's coalition are, of course, eligible for retreat.

According to the rules, a player could take his combat step before movement, then move an army that has already fought into an enemy-occupied space, necessitating a battle. Is this as it should be?

No. A rule addition is called for: No army can attack more than once per turn. It may be attacked any number of times by different armies, though. If an army has already attacked something that turn, it can only move into an unoccupied area or a friendly one. Exception: If underground movement causes an army to randomly pop up into an enemy-occupied territory, the battle *must* be fought. An unlimited series of retreats and battles may occur using random underground movement.

When using a spy to take a counter from an opponent, can you look at his counters' faces before you chose?

No; see section 19: "A spy can be used to steal a counter from an opponent's Hand, peek at the opponent's entire Hand, or attempt treachery." The spy cannot do more than one of these three things at the same time.

Does a tribal coalition retain control of a territory after moving out?

Yes. The only ways to lose control over a territory occur when it is captured or claimed by an invading chief, or traded during the Trade Phase.

Does an enemy chief capture a territory by simply moving into it?

Yes. He must end his move in that territory, however.

Can a chief move into an unoccupied enemy territory to levy troops?

Yes; see section 8. When ending a move in an empty territory, it is automatically captured. Troops can then be levied.

Is TSR, Inc., planning to release ORCWARS! in a boxed set?

Not yet, but we are thinking about it. ORCWARS! will be published again in the 10th D&D® game Gazetteer (to be released in January 1989) with solid counters; rules and map clarifications will be added then.

Are Gold Country East and West different territories?

Yes. The Streele River is the border between the two. The city of Corunglain is part of Gold Country East.

Can Multiple Chief Operations be used defensively?

Yes; see section 12.

Designer's notes

The Tribal Coalition Markers are the ones with the black background. You'll notice that they have different symbols on each side. This is not an error, but a trick to make their use more flexible. For example, if a player needs more than 10 skull markers printed face up, he may "borrow" another player's markers that have skull symbols on the back.

The ORCWARS! game was originally designed and playtested for four players. Due to our graphic designer's ingenuity, it appeared we could add more counters in the course of production. This explains why there are six sets of Tribal Coalition Markers. The game can be played in a six-player variant; however, you should realize that the chances that some players will run out of chiefs are then much greater. Chief counters are likely to end up in the players' Hands early in the game, preventing "chief-less" factions from starting over. I would suggest the following cutthroat variant be used for the six-player game:

1. Any time a chief is killed while another player has no chief (either on the board or in Hand), that player may show his entire Hand and automatically pick that chief counter. The chief is placed in the player's Hand, and the counters are turned face down. Then discard any excess counters.

2. After showing his entire hand, a chief-less player may use a spy with a +2 bonus to any roll the spy makes, without paying any gold at all. His Hand is then flipped face down after the treachery attempt (see section 19). For example: A chief-less faction causes the Spy Master to be worth four points instead of two.

3. If a player is unable to prove he has a chief in Hand (by showing the counter) within three turns following the demise of his last chief, the player is out of the game. Return all his counters to the appropriate cups. This makes for a much deadlier game; however, it keeps the playing time within reasonable limits. A six-player game is otherwise likely to be much longer than the original version.

4. Of course, if all players except one are eliminated using this game variant, the surviving faction automatically wins the game.

A final note: ORCWARS! is best played aggressively. This is what makes the game fun. As an incentive for a purely orcish attitude, I would allow a weak attacker (1-2 combat ratio or worse) to pick a free counter from either the Gold Cup or the Tribe Cup, and place it directly in his Hand

— whether he survives the battle or not. Such is the reward for daring and glory.

The true winner of ORCWARS! is the one who bullies the others the most. And if you die trying — well, at least you did the right thing any self-respecting follower of Groomsh would have done. Just hit your chest with your fist and bellow "Skum!" and you'll know that you've been a good orc commander. Ω





o hunt a dragon requires patience. Not the patience of minutes and hours, but the patience of days and weeks. Perhaps that is why the holy Cardinal Vitelli gave me this particular act of penance, that I may have time to reflect upon my sin.

My legs are cramped. I rub my hand over the stubble that is my beard. I am tired, cold, and hungry. A few small pieces of bread and a few equally stale swallows of water are all that remain of my provisions. My sword waits restlessly in its scabbard, as does the knife in my boot. Though my legs are numb, I dare not move. One tumbling pebble, one flash of steel could betray my presence.

I search the sky. Always the sky. Day is fleeing, the blue shifting to violet. The evening star and her first consorts are already shining. Of the dragon, there is no sign. Even so, he could be soaring undetected in the dusk.

For the hundredth time, I survey the surroundings of my aerie. To one side, the face of a mountain presses close against me; to the other, a ledge falls away into the void. Peaks of the Carpathians, snowless in early autumn, rise across the valley in purple twilight. Far below, a loop of dull silver marks the course of a river. The town inside the loop is already invisible, lost in the gloom.

Night has come. The canopy of stars wheels overhead. Now, concealed in shrouding darkness, I shift my limbs, stretch them, and let the blood flow. I eat the last of the bread and drink all but a few sips of the water. If my quarry does not return to his lair tomorrow, I shall be locked in a contest against time. I have attained this perch undetected, but any attempt to renew my provisions would risk discovery. I will not tempt the Fates. Instead, I contemplate the justice of Cardinal Vitelli.

The cardinal is a great man; his penance is fair. One sign of his greatness is the faith that the Holy Father, Adrian of Utrecht, places in him. Adrian, a pious and ascetic man, is sweeping away the indulgences and material excesses that permeated all the Church under Pope Leo. Under Adrian, the Cardinal of Milan has risen in prominence, becoming the new Pope's strong right arm. Would that I serve my Emperor and my Church as well.

The sky is clear as the sun rises above the horizon. The day will be hot; my water will not last long. My stomach presses against my backbone, the pangs of hunger already begun. It is fortunate that I have soldiered on many a campaign and am accustomed to such privations.

I fix my mind upon my penance. Slay a dragon, take the heartscale, and find a wizard powerful enough to compound the heartscale potion. The last part I have already done. I found in Lübeck an old wizard who brewed such a potion nearly half a century ago. If he has not lost the trick of it, the elixir will give great powers of transformation.

True, the wizard spoke with me reluctantly, full of distaste for me and my holy mission. Apparently, the old man has come to revere dragons.

The wizard's reverence matters not, however. The Diet

Eyes of Redemption

by James Brunet

Illustrations by John Lakey

of Worms recently declared dragons to be the spawn of Satan. Scholars say only half a dozen survive in all the region between the fjords of Sweden and the gates of the Bosphorus. It took meticulous effort over a period of months just to find this one lair. Men of faith and righteousness will soon see that they are no more.

But though I fear God, I am no theologian, only a simple mercenary captain. For me, the dragon is simply another adversary, no more than a traitorous city to be sacked or an opponent's army to be defeated on the field. The weapons are the same: guile, cunning, treachery, decisiveness, and well-tempered steel.

The sun beats at me like a swordsman wearing down a foe. My mouth is dry. Is this defeat I taste? It will be ironic if von Hertenstein, the survivor of three-score battles across the breadth of Europe, falls victim to the elements of nature high on a Silesian mountaintop.

Where is the dragon? Sage writings say that dragons rarely forage for longer than two weeks at a time, yet I have waited upon this ledge for twenty days. Under the hot sun, I begin to doze.

A cry that splits the world rouses me. Giant wings, the color of dried blood and rust and burnished gold, flash before my eyes. Startled, I attempt to rise, only to have my legs cramp terribly and give way beneath my weight. I stumble and then pitch forward. My fingers scrape against the cliffside as I fall, and the shock of contact pushes me outward into the void. My wits are dulled and my reflexes slow. In what seems a span of hours, a moan erupts from my throat, and I reach desperately for the mountain as it slides upward just beyond my reach. The sun flashes in my eyes, a spasm of pain racks my gut, and another great, raucous cry fills the air. A shadow sweeps over me and —

Darkness. Pain. Smooth warmth under my head and back. Sleep.

I awaken slowly, reborn into a world dimly lit. My vision comes into focus. Rough granite walls slope toward an opening lit by faint sunlight; the stone itself glimmers with a pale golden glow. I am in a cave. My right leg is aflame with pain; I fear the bone is broken. Slowly, I prop myself on one elbow. My throat is dryer than the dusty roads of Sicily in August. In a cave there should be water. I sit up and then notice the floor upon which my hand rests. It is dark and yellow, like fine gold, yet softer than the fairest leather. It is fashioned into overlapping plates, like the modern armors of Burgundy and Milan, with no small crevices to admit stiletto or chance arrow. My mind floods with the memory of my vigil and my quarry. Before I can utter a sound, a voice echoes in the darkness.

"Do you desire water, son of man?"

The voice is deep and resonant, like the bass pipes of a cathedral organ. It is melodic, like a fast-running stream. It is full of the wisdom of white-haired men bent over books, yet it also has notes of joy like the squeal of a child discovering a butterfly in sunlight.

I turn my head. Luminous yellow eyes regard me; it is their glow that shimmers on the granite walls. A long neck, surprisingly slender, supports the dragon's head.

Wings are folded back, disappearing into the darkness. The dragon has forelimbs not much larger than a man's arms. At the ends of these are taloned hands, clasped in the manner of a bishop hearing confession.

The dragon's body is my resting place. My head has lain above his heart, directly on the heartscale. I stare at his chest for a long moment before returning my gaze to his eyes.

"Yes, water," I croak.

The dragon nods and reaches a taloned hand behind him. There is a scrape and then a gurgle as a spring fills a gourd with precious life. I drink greedily, water spilling down my beard and onto my jerkin. With a start, I realize my breastplate has been removed, rendering me most vulnerable. For the moment, it does not matter. I am at the dragon's mercy. My knife is gone. My sword, at least, still rests in its scabbard.

"The gourd was a lucky find," says the dragon, "carelessly abandoned when I appeared over a well. There is a chicken, too. It is difficult for me to hunt game so small, but I considered a whole deer or goat to be impractical. You will need to build a fire, unless you eat flesh raw. I have gathered wood for you at the mouth of the cave. Flint, however, I do not have."

I look at the yellow eyes once more. The expression is unfathomable. I detect no sign of malice, nor of compassion.

"I have a flint. But my leg is broken."

The eyes stare, unblinking. "If you are hungry enough, you can crawl or hobble."

I look the length of the cavern toward its opening and then back at the dragon. Is there amusement in his attitude? I cannot tell. "I will walk." It is painful, but I negotiate the passage.

It takes me a short while to tear enough bark and splinters from the gathered branches and logs to provide sufficient kindling. Soon a fire is burning, the plucked chicken roasting over flames that dance and jump as the fat drips sizzle upon the wood. The acrid smoke drifts past my eyes. I peer outward from the cave's mouth. It is as I had surveyed it, close to the peak of the mountain, a scant bowshot away from the ledge where I maintained my vigil. The sun is already low in the west; I must have slept the better part of a day. Or two.

After I eat the chicken, I feel more complete, my body and mind refreshed. The pain in my leg has subsided to a deep ache. Perhaps it is not broken after all. Fatigue carries me along toward sleep, but I hobble back to the dragon. He has not moved.

For a moment I am again transfixed by his yellow gaze. A surge of emotion comes over me. At once I am defiant and humble, awestruck and grateful.

"I came to kill you." Naked and unadorned by deceit, the words spring from my mouth before fear can check them. Inexplicably, I feel blood rushing to my cheeks.

"What is your name?"

The dragon's question catches me off guard. An exchange of pleasantries is not usual, in my experience, after one has announced a mortal intent. "Von Hertenstein. Joachim von Hertenstein."

"And I am Eskahelion, von Hertenstein who came to

kill me."

I have no response to this. I briefly meet the stare of his yellow eyes before shifting my gaze back to the dark golden scales that cover his body. The dragon — I cannot bring myself to call him by name; indeed, I marvel at his speech and am wonderstruck at the idea of a dragon bearing a name — is silent for better than a minute.

At length he says, "Sleep." I eye the expanse of his belly that previously served as my bed and think better of resting there again. I lie myself out at one side of the cavern and use my folded arms as a pillow. For a moment, my mind is filled with images of the cardinal's face, plump and colored with passion, as he lectures me on the magnitude of my sin and duty to the Church. It is extraordinary that a prince of the Church troubles himself over much about the death of innocents. Yet how much more extraordinary that I have spoken with a dragon. I fall asleep.

The Olivetian convent is aflame. The French defenders are throwing down their weapons and trying to escape through the smoke before my men cut them down. From the convent, the piteous cries of the wounded and the holy sisters trapped within assault my ears. I begin to choke on the smoke, gasping for air, and I shut my eyes as tears begin to sting. Suddenly, the cries cease.

I open my eyes. It is morning. I close my eyes once more and pray for forgiveness. Then I remember the dragon.

In the following days, I slowly regain my strength. Eskahelion — the name comes easier to my tongue now — flies from the mountain daily to hunt small game or to raid farm stock so that I may eat.

He is a magnificent creature in flight, his wings widespread as he soars. It appears that the manner of a dragon's flight is closely related to that of the birds inhabiting the lands near the ocean, seldom beating their wings, instead riding the currents of the air as an experienced boatman might use those of the water. None of the learned manuscripts I have read concerning dragons mention powers of speech or the nature of their flight. I wonder what other surprises await me.

My leg mends; I've fashioned a splint from two pieces of firewood, binding them with the laces from my jerkin. I suspect that the break, if indeed it is a break, is of the least sort where the bone is not displaced. My ribs are also sorely hurt, and from the pain I suspect one or two may be cracked, but I have no doubt that I will soon be well enough to ride into battle once again.

Long before my body heals, though, I will know whether or not my soul will be fit to pass into Heaven. Torching the convent was a wasteful gesture. The walls of the city had already been breached, the enemy's spirit already broken. The detachment inside the convent could not have held out long. It was only my pride and my impatience that demanded an immediate victory. Six of the holy sisters burned to death. I must not be impatient now.

On the fourth day in the cave, I find my breastplate in a side grotto, the metal ripped and torn as if it had been

the flimsiest fabric of a lady's gown. In the rear of the cavern, I find Eskahelion's hoard, if such it might be termed. Not a single coin, not a lone bar of bullion, not one bracelet for the neck or arm, nor even a solitary sparkling gem of red or blue or green comprises his trove. Instead, there are mounds of books and scrolls, full of diverse writings in scripts and tongues that I do not recognize. Many are tattered, crumbling with age; even the best have torn pages.

That night, I ask Eskahelion about the books and scrolls, and he tells me this tale.

"In the earliest days, dragons tended the tree of wisdom, and men revered them. But as time passed, men came to fear the power of dragons, and relations between the two races became marked with discord. Only a few brave sons of man endured in their relations with dragons. These were the wizards, to whom the dragons gave the secrets of wondrous magics."

I think of the wizard of Lübeck in his gray, tattered robes, and I imagine him working side by side with the dragon.

"They reaped the fruits of the tree of wisdom," continued Eskahelion, "writing down their discoveries in the great books and scrolls. But then came a time when the wizards, ever the sons of man, grew jealous, seeking powers that even dragonkind has not. And so all men became set against dragons.

"Knowledge was still left to man, ready to be redeemed from the books and scrolls. But the wisdom was not guarded well and many writings were lost. One last great king, possessed of wisdom, decreed that as many books and scrolls as could be found should be gathered at Alexandria."

Alexandria. Founded by the greatest conqueror the world has known, one who surpassed even the Caesars. A noble city, founded by a noble man. Many a soldier has



spoken of its grandeur.

"For a generation — two, three — the darkness was held back. If the wisdom was not reclaimed, at least it was gathered and held. But then dark forces threatened Alexandria with sack and plunder.

"And the dragons, companions to man from the earliest times when the world seemed a flowering garden, despaired. And from their despair a desperate hope was born. From the four winds came the dragons, descending upon Alexandria. Ill it was that even then our numbers were so few; ill it was that many were turned back from the city by hurled spear and bowed arrow, even as the armies of man approached the gates. But some few dragons prevailed, grasping what few books could be carried away. And then noble Alexandria was sacked. Dark columns of smoke rose from the library, dispersing wisdom upon the wind. My small hoard is all that now remains."

I have witnessed the sack of many cities, but none that I recall contained any great library such as Eskahelion describes. I imagine, though, that the smoke from so much paper would indeed be dark and rich.

I listen to Eskahelion's tale politely and take profit from it. With a seed of truth, clearly it is a fabrication designed to cloud my mind. Fortunately, I am well toward recovery and my wits are regaining their quickness. Men and dragons companions? Such an obvious lie puts me on proper guard.

And yet, though I be no theologian, the tale interests me. The story of the garden and wisdom and scaled serpent finds its echo in Holy Scripture. Thus I must be cautious about what I reject, at the peril of my soul. I mumble an expression of polite thanks for the tale, much as one might acknowledge a round of ale provided by a fellow traveler at an inn. And then my head nods and with little pretense I make to sleep.

It is the seventh day since I awakened upon the dragon's belly. My sleep has been troubled, and I grow wary of the dragon's intent. He brings me food that I may sustain myself, yet he seems to bide his time with purpose unknown. The thought occurs that I am being fattened for the slaughter, but I dismiss the supposition as unlikely. Studies of nature by learned men show that dragons rarely devour human flesh.

My thoughts dwell upon my penance and the needs of Christendom. All Europe had reverberated with terror when the infidel Turk summoned the djinn that wrought such havoc at the walls of Belgrade before that city fell.

Faced with such a threat, Christendom may have need for a holy hero to transform himself into some powerful creature to defeat the vile magics of the East. Indeed, when His Eminence the cardinal laid this quest upon me, I doubt that he knew what power could be obtained from a heartscale potion. My mission, then, is not only one of personal absolution, but of duty to my Church and my sovereign, Charles V, whose Holy Roman Empire is a bulwark against both heresy and infidels.

Yet thoughts of duty aside, I am uncertain how to proceed. In my present condition and without the advantage of surprise, I am no match for the dragon. Though he is

much smaller than I would have thought — his body is not more than twice the length and girth of a man if the tail not be counted — he moves with great agility. Furthermore, he never seems to sleep. And my broken breastplate bears mute testimony to the strength and sharpness of his claws; I fear his strength is indeed supernatural.

For a weapon, I have my sword only, which cannot be concealed. I might wish I had included an arquebus, for shot does terrible damage. But it is a clumsy weapon, woefully inaccurate. In any event, it would have been too much an encumbrance when stealth and concealment counted for all. And yet if I cannot fight, I cannot flee. Should I dare to essay an escape down the mountainside, I fear the dragon would hunt me and pluck me up as neatly as a hawk does a rabbit.

My desperation grows. The dragon rests in the rear of the cave and watches me silently, his yellow eyes set upon me as if he awaits some event. Inaction is the cardinal sin of the soldier; decisiveness, the golden virtue. My leg is now well enough that I can walk with some little difficulty, so there is no holding back on that account. I have worn my sword without his comment for these seven days. Now its weight grows at my side. Yet even as I wonder why the dragon has let me remain armed, I doubt I can succeed unless I take him unawares. A plan takes shape in my mind.

"I have given much thought, Eskahelion, to your tale of the fruits of wisdom. Perhaps . . . perhaps I might study the writings so that some of what knowledge remains might come into the world once again."

The dragon lumbers forward on his hind legs and instantly I am frightened. Have I made a fatal error? His yellow eyes gaze at me intently, seeming to penetrate my soul. I am astounded at his reply.

"Joyful indeed is this night!" he exclaims. "Redemption must come from within the heart of man, and for this I have waited. When I saw that a son of man had the courage and daring to come to this remote place to kill me, I hoped that perhaps such a one might have the spirit to undertake the challenge of wisdom." He puts his forelimbs upon my shoulders and embraces me as I contain a shiver.

"Which of the writings do you feel that I might attempt to understand first?" I venture, struggling to keep all quaver from my voice. The dragon's eyes stare into mine for a long instant and then he lowers his forelimbs.

Does he doubt my sincerity? For a moment, I am again afraid. Then he turns and shambles to the rear of the cave. I follow. He leans over and begins scrabbling through the manuscripts until at last he espies the one of his choice and nestles it in his foreclaws. "Now this one dates to the Elder Days, after the time of the Garden, but before —"

I draw my sword as he speaks, hoping his words will cloak any small scrape of blade against scabbard. As he turns to face me, he sees the drawn blade. Aiming to miss the heartscale, and praying that the point will pierce the leather-like scales and strike some vital spot, I thrust. It plunges deep into his chest.

For a moment, there is no reaction. I stand half-

paralyzed, a ringing noise in my ears. And then blood, dark and red, begins to gush from the wound.

"Ever the son of man," he whispers, and dies.

The body tumbles sideways to the floor; his tail and wings twitch for a moment and then lie quiet. I have slain a dragon!

Only, the lidless yellow eyes do not close. I withdraw my sword from the dragon's chest. One thrust has felled my quarry. Yet the yellow eyes unnerve me. For a moment I think of thrusting my sword into the eyes, hacking and slashing at them again and again. But then, with trembling hand, I wipe my blade against the dragon's skin, sheathe it, and survey the cave. The fire that cooked my supper grows dim. Tonight, I will sleep near the coals; tomorrow, I will begin my journey back to Vienna and thence to Milan.

I awaken. I have passed the night in a dreamless sleep. Hunger gnaws at my gut; no dragon will bring me food today. I walk to the rear of the cave. The dragon's corpse is cool, and the yellow eyes have lost their glow. Yet, even lifeless, they stare at me. Grimly and deliberately, I set to work. Sliding my sword under their edges, I pry up the scales covering the dragon's heart and cut them off.

I am done, leaving exposed a dark patch of raw flesh. Blood still oozes from the wound, covering my blade and my hands; some has even spilled onto my boots. I wonder that the blood still runs.

Carefully, I tuck the scales inside my jerkin. The heart-scale will serve as an ingredient for my potion. The remainder will be payment to the wizard and serve to make lesser potions of his own.

As I leave the cave, I feel yellow eyes staring at my back. Soon I shall receive my absolution. Comforted by thought of my purified soul, I clamber down the mountain.

I reclaim my possessions from the solitary inn of the village at the foot of the mountain and tip the innkeeper handsomely. Fresh clothes, a shave, a bath, draughts of ale, and a midnight romp with one of the serving maids, who gives delight worth twice the few coins that I press into her grateful hands, do much to restore my spirit. At dawn, I set out for Lübeck, a week's journey.

The wizard is standing outside his hut; he seems surprised to see me. The surprise turns to sadness as I press into his hands the linen bundle containing the dragon's scales. The wizard is an old man, doubtless a Jew or worse, head bowed, with scraggly gray curls falling haphazardly past his ears. He is dressed in the shabbiest of cast-off cloaks, his skin is the color of dirty sandstone, and his face is covered with furrows not unlike those cut by a plow on a hilly field.

"I did not think you would best a dragon in battle," he says softly. "I wonder who has died." I look at the wizard, uncomprehending. The dragon has died, is it not obvious?

Apparently, my thoughts are clear upon my face, for he continues. "Whenever a dragon dies, a wizard dies also. Whenever a dragon gives birth, a new wizard gains powers. When the last dragon dies, so passes the last wiz-

ard. A strict equality, born of a long-ago curse in response to an ancient betrayal."

Unaccountably, I envision my blade thrusting through scales dark and gold, the blood oozing forth and coating my steel as yellow eyes regard me. *Ever the son of man.*

"It is of little import," says the wizard. "No one has been added to the count of wizards in half a lifetime." His fingers stroke the scales slowly, reverently. "The time of magic and dragons approaches its end. Now to your potion."

Yes, my potion. My heart sings praises to God. The wizard turns and calls out. A young man, as ill-kempt as his master, comes out of the hut. The wizard speaks to him in an arcane language. A question, an answer, and then the young man cautiously accepts the scales. I watch him, fearful that my ordeal will be for naught if the heartscale is somehow mistreated.

"My son, my apprentice," explains the wizard. "Though I doubt the power will ever come to him, unless I die before the next dragon falls. Fear not. He will take the greatest care in making the preparations. I myself will mix the potion. You may return to claim it a fortnight hence."

"A fortnight?" This is preposterous. Now that I have nearly completed my obligation, it seems unbearable that some rogue in a dark alley or some vile flux could relieve me of my life and consign my soul to Hell before absolution is granted. With a melancholy temper, I take my leave. I count the days until I am reconciled with God.

I spend the next two weeks in alternate bouts of elation and gloom. Visions of a grateful and holy Cardinal Vitelli accompany nearly every waking moment. I pass the days drinking and gambling; my fortune with the dice is sufficient to provide more than adequate suppers and companionship in a suitably entertaining bordello. One game, though, I lose when I roll a pair of aces. The yellowed dice stare at me like dragon's eyes. I am in ill temper for the remainder of the evening.

News arrives that good Pope Adrian has died suddenly. Worse, a Florentine of the accursed Medici family has been elected in his place, taking the name of Clement. Oh, my Church. Almost better that that heretic Luther be elected. I down a great quantity of wine as I contemplate these events, and have to be carried to my room by the innkeeper's servants.

I return to claim my potion from the wizard. His son waits at a distance, watching intently. Remembering that a dragon's death means death for a wizard, I understand a wizard's reluctance to hunt dragons. The scales must be coveted all the more, then, and I worry that greed on the wizard's part may have led him to dilute my potion and keep a part of the heartscale for himself. The old man assures me that I have naught to fear. I remind myself that a guarantee writ in steel hangs in my scabbard as I accept the flask from his hands.

"He who drinks the potion must simply state his desire to be transformed," says the wizard. "But, I beg of you to take the utmost care. Many desires will consume you." Well, the problem will not be mine. The potion will pass

to someone chosen by the Church.

I put the flask in a leather pouch and turn to leave, my horse standing ready to carry me to Milan. Momentarily, I look back. For an instant, I glimpse contempt and disgust on the old man's face, but then they are gone, replaced by a dull, placid expression. After a moment, I dismiss my anger. I have my potion and my soul will be cleansed.

I am dressed in my best velvet breeches and a silk doublet. A blue woolen cloak, embroidered with fine silver thread, hangs from my shoulders. My hair has been trimmed, my beard shaved, and a jaunty, wide-brimmed hat sporting the plume of some exotic bird adorns my head. The hilt of my sword has been polished and the scabbard leather buffed with finest soap. The leather pouch holding the potion hangs from my belt.

I stride up the broad white steps of the Castello Sforzesco and am guided by a series of functionaries toward the chambers where Cardinal Vitelli conducts his business. My boots produce an echo as I walk down a vaulted hallway of rose-colored marble and past a row of tall windows that admit the afternoon sun.

At last I am admitted to the antechamber of His Eminence Giuseppe Cardinal Vitelli, Archbishop of Milan. His secretary, a dour man wearing a black cap that hangs over his ears, looks up from the desk where he is scribbling some letter, bids me have a seat, and returns to his scratchings. He glances at me every few moments, fixing a cold gray eye upon me. The secretary would make a fine watchdog.

The bench upon which I sit is cushioned with a dark velvet pallet secured by straps of gold brocade. On the wall opposite, in a gilded frame, is a painting of the Madonna — the work of Signor Raphael, if I am any judge.

It is gratifying to know that the cardinal is a patron of the arts. I believe that all great and holy men should be acquainted with some of man's nobler impulses.

At last the secretary finishes whatever task had occupied him, folding the paper and sealing it with wax. He turns his attention to me.

"The signor's name and business with His Eminence?"

"Joachim von Hertenstein. I have completed my penance and have come to seek the cardinal's blessing."

The secretary's brow furrows with thought. "Von Hertenstein, von Hertenstein. . . . Oh, yes. The soldier who fired the convent, killing Sister Felicia."

"Killing six sisters," I say, remembering the flames and the cries.

"Hrrmph. Well, yes, but only Sister Felicia was one of His Eminence's mistresses at the time, at least insofar as I know," says the secretary, looking at me dolefully. "In any event, His Eminence is not in the city this week, being, ah, entertained at the estates of the Visconti."

The secretary sees the expression on my face, but misunderstands. "Come, come, signor. I'm sure His Eminence will be happy to grant you his blessing upon his return. If you care to leave a donation of five gold ducats, I can assure you the blessing will be granted *in absentia*. Perhaps that might be a better course anyway. To be

truthful, His Eminence may have already forgotten the matter. Nothing like a new love to replace the loss of an old."

"I thought . . . I thought that the cardinal was leading the" — no diplomatic word comes to my mind as my senses struggle to retain their equilibrium — "the fight against indulgences."

The secretary raises an eyebrow. "Signor von Hertenstein, can you not have heard? Pope Adrian is dead," he says, crossing himself quickly, "and, sad to say, all Italy rejoiced at his unfortunate and early passing. The new Holy Father has a more, ah, capable understanding of the Church's need for money and is not needlessly concerned with strictures against material comfort for those who do God's work."

I feel the blood rushing in my ears. The cardinal's piety counterfeit? I cannot believe it. "The cardinal, I thought he was a friend of Pope Adrian. . . ." My voice trails off.

The secretary licks his lips and smiles. "Why, yes, so he was. And His Eminence secured his appointment to the Curia. As one who is obviously a man of the world, wouldn't you call that a fair exchange, eh, signor?"

Comprehension finally bursts into my brain. I am mortified. Christ betrayed by Judas could not have suffered more.

I curtly take my leave. The secretary merely raises an indifferent eyebrow and shrugs at my departure. It is all one and the same to him. I walk from the Castello Sforzesco to the Piazza del Duomo, where I look dully at the cathedral spires probing the heavens. Then I wander the streets at random.

I walk late into the evening, until the streets are deserted except for the gentlemen of the watch. Fog envelops me, the dampness cold upon my face. I am still in a daze when I find myself at the Tyrolean Gate, closed and barred for the night. A pair of guards pace back and forth, halberds slung upon their shoulders. Above the gate, a pair of torches flicker and burn. Diffused by the fog, theirs is the image of two yellow eyes.

I had been vain and foolish. I had lacked wisdom. I had betrayed and been betrayed. I had been obsessed to the point of madness. These sins are very great, far outweighing the minor blasphemies committed in taverns and the dozens of lives taken in battle, most of which were no better or worse than my own. Too late, I understood the contempt in the wizard's eyes. Too late, I understood the hope that was surely Eskahelion's. I was lost.

But not forever. I gazed at the slopes of the Carpathians, covered with first snow. It was cold at the foot of the mountain. I sold my horse, my sword, and all possessions save for the simplest clothes. And the potion. The potion still remained.

Of the money, half I gave to the beggars of the town. The other half I gave to the poor priest of the village church. He was much perplexed, but if he is an honest priest, Mass will be said for my soul every week for years to come. For I still believed in the essence of truth that must lie underneath the guilt and the hypocrisy.

My breath was short; the air, cold. I stood on the crest of a ridge. The village lay far below me; the mountain

summit and a cave where once glowed two yellow eyes was still a considerable climb in front of me. But I needed to go no farther.

I stopped to survey my world a final time. A gray sky loomed overhead, a tiny river threads its way in the distance below. Dark forests on the lower slope concealed their mysteries and their bounty of game.

I looked skyward, half-expecting to see two yellow eyes and a pair of golden wings. Of course, the sky was empty. I pulled the stopper from my flask and drank steadily, one

swallow at a time. The color was blood red, the smell like burnt flesh, the taste bitter, bitter with greed and envy and hope. I uttered my desire. In moments, the transformation was complete. The potion was as powerful as the wizard claimed. Ever the son of man, I prayed for redemption.

Mountains and valleys spread out below me, a wrinkled blanket covering the landscape. I am happy. I soar among the clouds, looking upon the world with yellow eyes.

Ω

(continued from page 3)
the faintest idea of where this delusion originated. A housewife in West Germany (who had not eaten in over a week and was rather emaciated) told me of her fears that the Devil was about to get her whole family; she addressed me as God at the very start of our session.

Were I inclined to think that religion causes people to go crazy, I could certainly claim to have seen enough evidence to support the idea. Yet I know that religion does no such thing. It is a cornerstone upon which the spiritual well-being of humanity is built. Religious delusions are often seen among people with mental disorders, but the *disorders* cause the strange beliefs and behaviors — not vice versa.

This situation is analogous to the claims in recent years that role-playing games are harmful in various ways to the gamers. The “evidence” linking role-playing games to antisocial or destructive behavior is often ill-

made. In some cases, the material I’ve seen opposing RPGs approaches the status of urban legend. The information is widely heard and sometimes believed. Even reputable sources in the news media contribute to the mess, as CBS News did in a *60 Minutes* broadcast in September 1985, when it attempted to link a murder-suicide in Colorado to role-playing. This was interesting in light of a subsequent interview with the victims’ family, carried by the Associated Press during the week after the show, which showed that the victims’ mother did not believe the D&D® game was connected with the tragedy. Even the police investigating the case dropped any connection between the game and the event — yet this tragedy is still connected in the minds of some with gaming, thanks to *60 Minutes* — which, to my understanding, never bothered to reinvestigate the event.

The issue of whether certain games are harmful or not is a

serious one. I have no trouble understanding how some games, like lawn darts or those using gunlike infrared-targeting pistols or paint-pellet guns, could be called into question. But the case against role-playing is confounded with rumor, false information, and sensationalism. How could anyone take the opponents of role-playing seriously when they have such difficulty acquiring *facts* to support their thesis? But then, this is attempting to reason with an unreasoned response. If you don’t *want* to believe that role-playing is helpful and fun, then you won’t. If you want the truth, you have to be open to more than one side of an issue.

This issue of DRAGON® Magazine marks its twelfth year of publication. We enjoy bringing you the best in role-playing entertainment, and we plan to continue doing so for many years to come. We are proud of our work.

And that’s worth a little equal time to us.



TSR PREVIEWS

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Arcane Lore

Time heals all wounds (but these spells help)

Presented here are four new clerical spells, all of which deal with regenerative healing: *regenerate light wounds*, *regenerate serious wounds*, *regenerate critical wounds*, and *regenerative heal*. They are very similar to the three *cure wounds* spells and *heal*, but instead of receiving the healing all at once, the spell recipient slowly regenerates hit points at the rate of a few hit points each round. This, coupled with the fact that *regenerate wounds* spells heal less total damage than *cure wounds* spells of the same level, makes these newcomers to the cleric's arsenal less desirable than the older standbys, except for one thing: The *regenerate wounds* spells may be cast before the party encounters danger. This is helpful, especially to smaller parties, because it allows the cleric to fight or cast other spells in combat. At worst, the cleric will be free for a few rounds because the wounded will not need attention as soon. These spells also allow solo adventurers and parties without clerics to enlist the aid of friendly clerics (for a price, of course) before the adventure begins.

In adventures lasting more than one day, the cleric with these spells is faced with a choice: He must choose many *cure wounds* spells for the next day's adventuring (and return to playing a roving combat medic), or pick more *regenerate wounds* spells and continue with a more aggressive role in combat situations. Many players find the second option to their liking.

Only NPC clerics with the utmost confidence in the party and its goals will provide *regenerate wounds* spells (and then at a great cost). Unlike *cure wounds* spells, the *regenerate wounds* spells do not simply restore the party members to good

health; they strengthen the PCs. This is not to imply that *regenerate wounds* spells increase a character's maximum hit points. However, in most cases, a character who is the recipient of a *regenerate wounds* spell effectively has an additional number of hit points for a few days.

The costs for an NPC to cast *regenerate wounds* spells are listed in the table with this article. These prices may be lowered if the PCs' quest will benefit the cleric's deity or church. If the party is undertaking the adventure solely for the cleric or his church, the spells may be provided free of charge, but this may lessen the reward the party receives when it accomplishes its mission.

Regenerate wounds spells make NPC clerics stronger foes, as they will almost certainly have the most powerful such spells available and cast prior to combat. These spells also make NPC clerics stronger leaders, as they can strengthen their subleaders and followers, although chaotic and evil leaders will do so to a lesser degree so as not to unduly strengthen untrustworthy servitors. The reverse of these — the *degenerate wounds* spells — are favorites of clerics who worship gods of deception or trickery.

There are several ways to fight users of *regenerate wounds* spells. The most obvious tactic is to do only a slight injury to the user (hitting him with a low-level spell, for instance) and waiting for the injury to heal, dispelling the *regenerate wounds* dweomer. Another is to cast a *healing* spell on the user, which will also dispel the *regenerate wounds* spell. This latter action will not dispel a *regenerative heal* spell unless the recipient has not yet been injured; otherwise, it returns him to 4 hp or less of his hit-point maximum. And don't forget *dispel magic* as a possible form of attack.

DMs should note that most stupid monsters will not even realize that the regeneration of the PC is taking place, much less take logical steps to stop it. NPCs, on the other hand, especially high-level ones, will probably take very effective steps to negate *regenerate wounds* spells.

As a final note, none of these spells will work for a PC who has been slain. Hit-

point recovery is possible if a character has fallen into the negative hit-point range (down to and including -9 hp), but if a PC falls below -9 hp or is struck by a magical effect (like *symbol of death*) that slays him outright, all *regenerate wounds* spells previously cast upon that person are dispelled at once.

Regenerate Light Wounds

(Necromantic) Reversible

Level: 1

Components: V,S

Range: Touch

CT: 7 segments

Duration: See below ST: None

AE: Creature touched

Explanation/Description: This spell is much like the first-level clerical spell, *cure light wounds*. When it's cast on a wounded individual, he regenerates 1 hp per round for 2-5 rounds. If the recipient of the spell is at full hit points before the *regenerate light wounds* spell is cast, the spell has no immediate effect. Instead, if the individual is later injured (suffers at least 1 hp damage within the spell's duration), the regeneration "waits" to take place at that time. When the individual reaches his maximum hit points or has regenerated the full 2-5 hp, the spell dissipates. If the spell recipient has a subsequent curative spell (including another *regenerate wounds* spell) cast upon him, drinks a *potion of healing*, or uses other magical healing powers, the original *regenerate light wounds* spell is dispelled, although all healing already gained from the spell is retained.

The reverse of this spell, *degenerate light wounds*, causes the recipient to suffer 2-5 hp damage at the rate of 1 hp lost per round. This degeneration begins after the recipient is subsequently healed (or regains a hit point from resting) or gains hit points by any means. The degeneration stops when the spell has run its course or the victim dies. The *regenerate wounds* and *degenerate wounds* spells affect only those creatures affected by *cure light wounds* spells, and the healing or injury is only as permanent as that provided by a *cure light wounds* spell.

The "waiting" duration of a *regenerate light wounds* spell is 24 hours per level of the spell's caster; its healing effects are permanent. The duration of this spell's reverse is equally long.

Regenerate Serious Wounds

(Necromantic) Reversible

Level: 4

Components: V,S

Range: Touch

CT: 9 segments

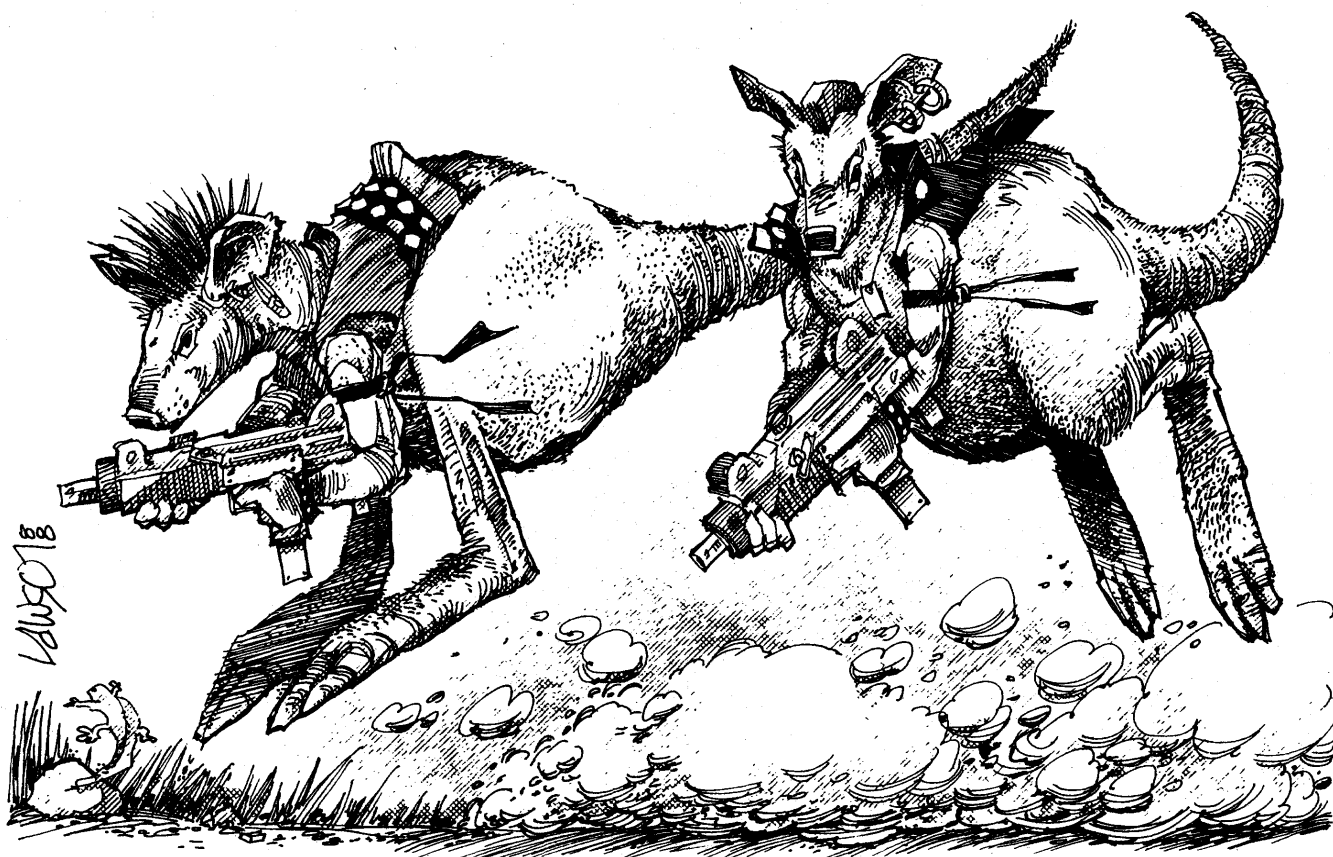
Duration: See below ST: None

AE: Creature touched

Explanation/Description: This spell is the same as the first-level clerical *regenerate light wounds* spell except for its duration (48 hours per level of the caster for a "waiting period" with permanent effects) and magnitude. This spell heals 5-11 (2d4 + 3) hp at a rate of 1 hp per round. The reverse of this spell has the opposite effect, as per a *degenerate light wounds* spell.

Spell-Casting Costs Table

Regenerative Spell	Cost
<i>Regenerate light wounds</i>	200 gp
<i>Regenerate serious wounds</i>	650 gp
<i>Regenerate critical wounds</i>	1,300 gp
<i>Regenerative heal</i>	5,000 gp



Discover exotic, post holocaust Australia

Mutants Down Under

A supplement for **Heroes Unlimited** and **Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles**

It is Australia, generations after nuclear war has ravaged the Earth. Human-kind clings to survival by a thread.

A new breed of *intelligent* life, mutant animals, has risen from the ashes of destruction. To the Aborigine survivors, the appearance of the mutant animals is the fulfillment of the "Dream Time" legend. They believe the animals have returned to live with man as brothers. But their life of peaceful coexistence is threatened by invaders from what was once Indonesia.

They call themselves the *Masters of Bio-Technology*. And they have claimed Australia as an extension of their empire. Their plan is one that has never failed them yet; to "seed" Australia with deadly mutant plants that will trap and devour the enemy. The tribes of Australia, human and mutant animal, must unite to combat the invaders or become their slaves.

Highlights Include . . .

- Over 20 new mutant animals.
- The Dream Time Sorcerer
- Post-Holocaust Australia mapped and described.
- The Masters of Bio-Technology and their monstrous minions.
- Plus adventures to get you started.
- A companion book for *After the Bomb™* and *Road Hogs™*
- \$6.95 Please add \$1.00 for postage.

TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA TURTLES

Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles & Other Strangeness captures the adventure and weirdness of the Ninja Turtles' comic book and T.V. show. The rules enable you to create and play any type of mutant animal with a variety of powers, abilities and martial arts. Plus an 8 page comic strip, adventures, the Ninja Turtles and other characters. The complete rule book is only **\$9.95**.

TMNT Adventures provides five different adventures that will send your characters around the world. Includes the infamous "Death Trials" scenario. **\$6.95** Please add \$1.00 for postage.

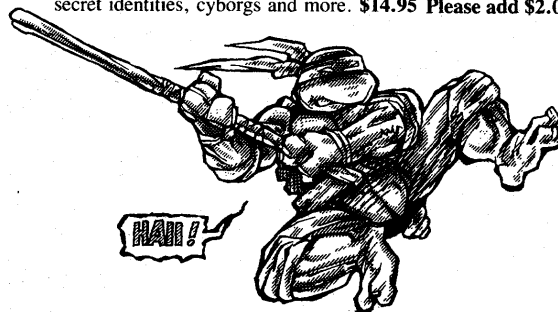
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TMNT Sourcebook: Road Hogs! An "After the Bomb" companion of post-holocaust mayhem on the highways of the shattered West Coast. Vehicle combat rules, 20 new animal mutations and four adventures complete this package. **\$6.95** Please add \$1.00 for postage.

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Regenerate Critical Wounds

(Necromantic) Reversible

Level: 5

Components: V,S

Range: Touch

CT: 1 round

Duration: See below ST: None

AE: Creature touched

Explanation/Description: This spell is the same as the first-level clerical *regenerate light wounds* spell, except for its duration (72 hours per level of the caster for a "waiting period," with permanent effects) and magnitude. This spell heals 9-18 (3d4 + 6) hp at a rate of 1 hp per round. The reverse of this spell has the opposite effect, as per *degenerate light wounds*.

Regenerative Heal

(Necromantic) Reversible

Level: 7

Components: V,S

Range: Touch

CT: 12 segments

Duration: See below ST: None

AE: Creature touched

Explanation/Description: This spell is similar to the first-level clerical *regenerate light wounds* spell. When this spell begins to heal wounds, it does so at a rate of 4 hp per round and continues until the recipient is 4 hp or less from his maximum hit-point total, regardless of how much damage or healing the individual receives before that time. In other words, if the recipient is wounded again after receiving the wound that triggers this spell, the spell

continues to heal the recipient until he is 4 hp or less from his hit-point total, at which point the spell ceases to function. This spell has no effect on disease, blindness, insanity, loss of limb, or disabling spells. The "waiting" duration of this spell is one week per level of the caster, with permanent effects.

The reverse of this spell, *degenerative harm*, causes 4 hp damage per round once triggered by subsequent healing or injury. This spell ceases when the victim has 4 hp or less left, so it can weaken but not slay a victim. It causes no other harm to the recipient in the form of disease, insanity, etc.

Notes

When the *regenerate wounds* spells were first conceptualized (in the summer of 1983), I planned to make the *regenerate light wounds* spell a second-level clerical spell, one useful for adventuring parties but not meant to free the cleric for a more offensive role in combat. It was only while attending the GEN CON® 17 Game Fair in 1984 (where I played a warrior cleric in an AD&D® game adventure) that I realized how difficult a task it is for a cleric to add measurably to his party's offense. One of the most valuable things a cleric can do is to heal fellow PCs. Unfortunately, this often becomes an overwhelming responsi-

bility, and the cleric is often excluded from doing all else to tend to the wounds of his colleagues. This situation is only exacerbated by the introduction of a second-level *healing* spell, as the party members expect the cleric to pray for a number of these each day as well as for a number of first-level *cure light wounds* spells. This obviously reduces the number of *hold person* and *spiritual hammer* spells the cleric can gain. Make the *regenerate light wounds* spell a first-level spell, and not only can the cleric keep his party's hit points up, but he can participate in combat without having to weave his way back and forth through the group or abandon his *spiritual hammer* spells to tend to the wounded.

The DM can easily create *regenerate wounds* spells for druids as well. I recommend *regenerate light wounds* be a second-level druidic spell, *regenerate serious wounds* be a fourth-level spell, and *regenerate critical wounds* be a sixth-level spell, each having the same effects as its corresponding clerical version. I also recommend no *regenerative heal* spell for druids. Furthermore, all druidic *regenerate wounds* spells require mistletoe in order to be cast.

Optionally, the DM may require an additional material component (such as trolls blood) for the powerful clerical spell, *regenerative heal*.

Ω

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Official Ballot for the Origins Awards 1987

Presented by the Academy of Adventure Gaming Arts and Design

The following are the final nominees for the Origins Awards for 1987, to be awarded at 7:00 P.M., Saturday, August 20, at the 1988 GEN CON® ORIGINS™ Game Fair in Milwaukee, Wis., which runs August 18-21. The Origins Awards are presented annually for outstanding achievement in Adventure Gaming. Members of the Academy of Adventure Gaming Arts and Design nominate products for the awards.

This page is your official ballot. To vote, simply fill in only ONE box under each of the following 19 categories. Fill out the information at the bottom, then mail your completed ballot to: Origins Awards, P.O. Box 2712, Fairfax VA 22031. The deadline for returning your ballot is July 15, 1988. To obtain additional ballots, write to: ORIGINS '88, c/o TSR, Inc., P.O. Box 756, Lake Geneva WI 53147. Enclose \$1.00 per ballot in check, cash, or money order to cover postage and handling. Members of the Academy of Adventure Arts and Design will receive a final ballot in the mail, and should forward their ballots to the Academy. If you have any questions concerning either the ballot or the Academy, please write to: Origins Awards, P.O. Box 2712, Fairfax VA 22031.

1. Best Historical Figure Series, 1987

- ☐ American Civil War, 15mm (Stone Mountain Miniatures)
- ☐ American Plains Line (Rafm Co., Inc.)
- ☐ Shogun Hard Guys: The New Samurai (Ral Partha Enterprises)

2. Best Fantasy or Science-Fiction Series, 1987

- ☐ BattleTech Mech Warriors (Ral Partha Enterprises)
- ☐ DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® game figures (Citadel Miniatures)
- ☐ Groo the Wanderer (Dark Horse Miniatures)
- ☐ Julie Guthrie's Fantasy Line (Grenadier Models)
- ☐ Renegade Legion: Interceptor Line (FASA Corporation)

3. Best Vehicular or Accessory Series, 1987

- ☐ BattleTech Mech (Ral Partha Enterprises)
- ☐ Civil War Artillery (Rafm Co., Inc.)
- ☐ Hovels and Buildings, 15- & 25mm (Stone Mountain Miniatures)
- ☐ Machineries of Destruction (Citadel Miniatures)
- ☐ Star Trek Miniatures (FASA Corporation)

4. Best Miniatures Rules, 1987

- ☐ Chaos Wars (Ral Partha Enterprises)
- ☐ Harpoon (Game Designers' Workshop)
- ☐ Warhammer 40,000 (Games Workshop)

5. Best Role-Playing Rules, 1987

- ☐ Mega Traveller (Game Designers' Workshop)
- ☐ Paranoia, second edition (West End Games)
- ☐ Star Wars: The RPG (West End Games)
- ☐ Teenagers From Outer Space (R. Talsorian Games)
- ☐ TOP SECRET/S.I.™ game (TSR, Inc.)

6. Best Role-Playing Adventure, 1987

- ☐ Blood of the Yakuza, AD&D® Oriental Adventures (TSR, Inc.)
- ☐ Future in Flames series, MARVEL SUPER HEROES® game (TSR, Inc.)
- ☐ Ochimo the Spirit Warrior, AD&D® Oriental Adventures (TSR, Inc.)
- ☐ Scared Stiffs, Ghostbusters (West End Games)
- ☐ Tournament of Dreams, Pendragon (Chaosium, Inc.)
- ☐ Who Watches the Watchmen? DC Heroes (Mayfair Games, Inc.)

7. Best Role-Playing Supplement, 1987

- ☐ FORGOTTEN REALMS™ fantasy setting, AD&D® game (TSR, Inc.)
- ☐ GURPS Horror, GURPS (Steve Jackson Games)
- ☐ Manual of the Planes, AD&D® game (TSR, Inc.)
- ☐ Miskatonic U. Graduate Kit, Call of Cthulhu (Chaosium, Inc.)
- ☐ Star Wars Sourcebook, Star Wars: The RPG (West End Games)

8. Best Graphic Presentation of a Role-Playing Game, Adventure, or Supplement, 1987

- ☐ FORGOTTEN REALMS™ fantasy setting, AD&D® game (TSR, Inc.)
- ☐ Gazetteer series, D&D® game (TSR, Inc.)
- ☐ Miskatonic U. Graduate Kit, Call of Cthulhu (Chaosium, Inc.)
- ☐ Star Wars: The RPG (West End Games)
- ☐ Star Wars Sourcebook, Star Wars: The RPG (West End Games)

9. Best Pre-20th Century Boardgame, 1987

- ☐ Blood Royale (Games Workshop)
- ☐ Britannia (The Avalon Hill Game Company)
- ☐ D'Español-Talavera (Clash of Arms Games)
- ☐ LA GRANDE ARMÉE™ game (SPI/TSR, Inc.)
- ☐ Shogun (Milton Bradley Company)

10. Best Boardgame Covering the Period 1900-1946, for 1987

- ☐ Battle For Moscow (Game Designers' Workshop)
- ☐ MOSCOW 1941™ game (SPI/TSR, Inc.)
- ☐ ONSLAUGHT™ game (SPI/TSR, Inc.)
- ☐ Patton's Best (The Avalon Hill Game Company)
- ☐ Scorched Earth (Game Designers' Workshop)

11. Best Boardgame Covering the Period 1947 to date, for 1987

- ☐ Air Superiority (Game Designers' Workshop)
- ☐ Central America (Victory Games, Inc.)
- ☐ Fire Team (West End Games)
- ☐ Seventh Fleet (Victory Games, Inc.)
- ☐ Team Yankee (Game Designers' Workshop)

12. Best Fantasy or Science-Fiction Boardgame, 1987

- ☐ Arkham Horror (Chaosium, Inc.)
- ☐ GAMMARAUDERS™ game (TSR, Inc.)
- ☐ Renegade Legion: Interceptor (FASA Corporation)
- ☐ Isaac Asimov Presents Star Traders (Steve Jackson Games)
- ☐ Star Warriors, Star Wars: The RPG (West End Games)

13. Best Graphic Presentation of a Boardgame, 1987

- ☐ Chase (TSR, Inc.)
- ☐ GAMMARAUDERS™ game (TSR, Inc.)
- ☐ ONSLAUGHT™ game (TSR, Inc.)
- ☐ Shogun (Milton Bradley Company)
- ☐ Star Warriors, Star Wars: The RPG (West End Games)

14. Best Play-By-Mail Game, 1987

- ☐ Alamaze (Pegasus Productions)
- ☐ Heroic Fantasy (Flying Buffalo, Inc.)
- ☐ Nuclear Destruction (Flying Buffalo, Inc.)
- ☐ World Wide Battle Plan (Flying Buffalo, Inc.)

15. Best Fantasy or Science-Fiction Computer Game, 1987

- ☐ The Eternal Dagger (Strategic Simulations, Inc.)
- ☐ Phantasie III (Strategic Simulations, Inc.)
- ☐ Pirates! (MicroProse Software)
- ☐ Realms of Darkness (Strategic Simulations, Inc.)

16. Best Military or Strategy Computer Game, 1987

- ☐ Airborne Ranger (MicroProse Software)
- ☐ Panzer Strike! (Strategic Simulations, Inc.)
- ☐ Project: Stealth Fighter (MicroProse Software)
- ☐ Shiloh: Grant's Trial in the West (Strategic Simulations, Inc.)
- ☐ Sons of Liberty (Strategic Simulations, Inc.)

17. Best Screen Graphics in a Home Computer Game, 1987

- ☐ Airborne Ranger (MicroProse Software)
- ☐ Pirates! (MicroProse Software)
- ☐ Project: Stealth Fighter (MicroProse Software)

18. Best Professional Adventure Gaming Magazine, 1987

- ☐ Autoduel Quarterly (Steve Jackson Games)
- ☐ Computer Gaming World (Golden Empire Publications)
- ☐ DUNGEON® Adventures (TSR, Inc.)
- ☐ Fire & Movement (Diverse Talents, Inc.)
- ☐ Gateways (Gateways Publications, Inc.)
- ☐ Strategy & Tactics (World Wide Wargames)
- ☐ White Dwarf (Games Workshop)

19. Best Amateur Adventure Gaming Magazine, 1987

- ☐ Alarums & Excursions (Lee Gold)
- ☐ POLYHEDRON™ Newszine (TSR, Inc.)
- ☐ Volunteers
- ☐ Wild Hunt

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GAMES AUCTION

The 1988 GEN CON®/ORIGINS™ Game Fair has more things to do than you can ever imagine! We cannot begin to detail in this brief brochure, all the amazing events and guests that are planned for you at this year's Game Fair. Besides the hundreds of gaming events and tournaments, the seminars, workshops, game demonstrations, art show, and dealers exhibit, we also feature a popular highlight that has always been synonymous with the GEN CON® Game Fair. And that, is called the Games Auction.

Ah yes, the extravagant Games Auction. We're hoping to make this the biggest and best Games Auction ever, and we can achieve this challenge with your help.

The Games Auction has always had the best deals anywhere, on games that range from never-used, shrink wrapped current games to the tried and true classics from decades past. Games from virtually every game company in the world are sold at this auction. Not only do hundreds of gamers submit their games for sale, but game companies sometimes sell brand-new games at the auction for prices that are as low as 10% of the prices you would pay in stores.

In addition to the great prices on games, the auction enables you to find that rare game or magazine to add to your treasured collection that you can't find anywhere else. Here is your once a year chance to purchase these rare and unusual items of the gaming industry. Please take advantage of it! If you have a rare game, this is the place to sell it, as you will find eager buyers bidding for your games at prices you'll not find elsewhere.

Last year, hundreds of miniatures were snatched up by bargain hunters at the Game Auction. Fantasy miniatures were in the majority, but there were also a lot of modern armor, aircraft, infantry, Napoleonic figures, colonial figures, and much more.

More and more computer games are being sold at the Game Auction every year--games for every computer system. Don't have a computer? We've even sold computers at past auctions.

Not only are thousands of games and accessories selling for pennies on the dollar, but lots of non-gaming items are offered at the auction as well. Pieces of art, sculptures, ceramic figures, and medieval-style clothing are among the various staples of the auction. Tremendous values in professionally crafted authentic weapons also have been found at past Game Auctions.

How can you afford to miss this annual extravaganza? Just turn the page to see how to become a part of this special Game Fair highlight. We hope you will be there to help make this year's Auction the biggest and best ever!

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When is the Game Auction?

The selling times of the Auction are:

Thursday, August 18	10:00 A.M. to 9:00 P.M.
Friday, August 19	9:00 A.M. to 9:00 P.M.
Saturday, August 20	9:00 A.M. to 9:00 P.M.
Sunday, August 21	9:00 A.M. to 12:00 P.M.

When Can I Check In?*

The Check-In times for the Auction are:

Wednesday, August 17	12:00 P.M. to 6:00 P.M.
Thursday, August 18	8:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M.
Friday, August 19	8:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M.
Saturday, August 20	8:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M.
Sunday, August 21	8:00 A.M. to 10:00 A.M.

When Can I Check Out?

The Check-Out times for the Auction are:

Friday, August 19	9:00 P.M. to 10:30 P.M.
Saturday, August 20	9:00 P.M. to 10:30 P.M.
Sunday, August 21	12:00 P.M. to 3:30 P.M.



* Note that you can check in auction items on Wednesday, before the Game Fair starts. You may purchase seller cards, auction forms and bags for modules and magazines at this time, which will help to avoid the rush during the Game Fair. You can even mail in items ahead of time, even if you don't attend the convention. Read on!

BUYING ITEMS

Whether you are buying items, selling items, or doing a bit of both, you will need an auction card. Only those people with valid auction cards will be allowed to place or bid on items for sale at the auction. These cards cost a paltry \$1 and can be bought at the PAW booth outside the auction room on the second floor.

To bid on an item, you simply hold up your auction card until the price of the item is too high for you. If you are the last person holding a card up, the item is yours at the last price given. The auctioneer will record your card number with the price.

We ask that you pick-up purchased items only once per day, and that you wait until you leave the auction for the day. This will lessen the traffic at the check-out counters and move the lines much faster.

SELLING ITEMS

If you bring your items to the auction for sale the following procedures apply. (If you want to mail in your items, information is coming up)

First, purchase an auction card and auction forms ahead of time (use the coupon on the back page) or at the PAW booth in front of the auction room. You will need one form for each item you want to sell. The seller card costs \$1 and each form will set you back a nickel.

Fill out the forms and attach one each to the appropriate item. You should write in an honest description of the item and condition of the item and its contents (which should note any missing parts or defects). Also, fill in the minimum acceptable bid price in the space provided. This is the lowest amount you agree to accept for your item. **No items will be sold for less than 50 cents!** And, all minimum bids must be in multiples of 50 cents.

When you have filled out the forms, bring your items to one of the check-in areas noted in the On-Site Game Fair Program. Auction personnel will check your forms and items and then return a copy of your forms to you as a receipt. Make sure you receive and keep your copies of these forms--you will **not** get paid or get your unsold products back if you lose them!

During one of the listed check-out times, you can pick up your unsold items and the money due to you for your sold items. Neither money nor games will be returned at any other time.

MAIL-IN PROCEDURE

You can now mail your games and other auction items to us before the Game Fair even starts! This means you won't have to be delayed by registering your auction materials when you come to the Game Fair. You won't have to pack your auction items in the car, tote them on the plane, lug them on the bus, cart them on the train, bring them on the boat, or worry at all about how to get all of that stuff to the Game Fair.

Here is how it works. First, request the Games Auction forms by mailing in the coupon from the back page of this ad. You must pay five cents for each form you request, plus \$1 for an auction card (which also serves as your bidding card at the auction, so hang on to it). **Checks or money orders only--made out to TSR, Inc., will be accepted with your form request coupons.** You will also need an auction card, even if you will **not** be at the Game Fair.

Once you receive your auction card number and forms, fill out one form for each item you intend to put up for sale. Include an honest description title and condition of the contents of the item, as well as a minimum acceptable bid price. **NO ITEMS WILL BE SOLD FOR LESS THAN FIFTY CENTS!** All minimum bids must be in multiples of 50 cents. Put the completed form (including all three parts) inside the item for sale. Do this for each item you wish to sell. Box the items and mail them to the address on the form. When we receive them, we will return your copies of the forms, along with an acknowledgement of what items were received.

Each module and magazine must be put in a separate plastic storage bag. This insures that we don't have to tape the form to the cover of the module or magazine, which risks tearing the cover. If you require plastic storage bags, they can be purchased for 25 cents each.

SUBMIT ITEMS FOR SALE EVEN IF YOU CANNOT ATTEND THE GAME FAIR

To make your dealings with the Games Auction convenient for you, and to alleviate the 'convention crush' on our end, we offer this option to you. Request the auction forms and send in your items as above. Please include a second check for return postage. The amount of the check should be for half of what it cost you to mail the items to us (this assumes that at least half of your items will be sold). After the Game Fair, we will send you an accounting of the items sold and their selling prices, along with a check covering the sold items. Unsold items will only be returned if you sent a check to cover their return postage, or if the sale prices of your other games cover your return postage. If you do not want your unsold games back, write us a note to that effect, sign it, and send it along with your items. This option also helps us to sort and organize items ahead of time and alleviate some of the convention crush in August.

AUCTION STORE--SALES AT MINIMUM BID PRICE

To avoid buyer frustration and to keep the auction running smoothly, the vast majority of modules and magazines will be sold in the Auction Store. In the Auction Store, items are placed on tables and racks. Buyers may browse, buying items for the minimum bid price.

All modules, all single-copy DRAGON® magazines later than issue #40, and common issues of other magazines (those with minimum bids of less than \$10) are automatically sent to the Auction Store. Common items that do not sell in the Auction at the end of each day will, at the discretion of Auction Management, be moved to the Auction Store to be sold at the minimum bid price. Certain items, such as low-number DRAGON® magazines, rare magazines, rare games, etc., will NOT go into the Auction Store, even if they don't sell the first time or two in the auction. If you do not want an item to go into the Auction Store, you must state this on the auction form.

OTHER RULES

•**Commissions:** TSR, Inc. charges a 15% commission on all items that are sold in the auction and the Auction Store. (the buyer doesn't pay this--it comes out of the seller's proceeds.)

•**Methods of payment:**

1. MasterCard and VISA are acceptable, with a valid driver's license.
2. Personal checks cannot be accepted without a valid MasterCard or VISA and a valid driver's license. Auction management reserves the right to refuse any check.
3. The Auction accepts only U.S. currency.

•**Buyers Obligation:** Placing a bid on an item is legally binding. If yours is the accepted bid, you are obligated to pay that price. If you don't show up to pay for an item you successfully bid on, you will be billed at a later date and the cost of shipping and handling will be added to your bill.

•**Special Auction Schedule:** There will be several specific scheduled times for the sale of various categories of items, to encourage buyer interest and bidding competition. We will be posting notices of these times throughout MECCA and the auction room. Look for them at the Game Fair.

•**Buyers Beware:** All items sold are sold 'as is'. This means that you could purchase an item that is damaged or is missing parts. The auction staff will try to inspect every item to insure that it is properly described on the form. In the long history of the Auction, it is rare that an item has been sold without the buyer knowing what he or she was getting.

•**Management Rights:** The auction staff reserves the right to refuse to sell an item if it is felt to be offensive or otherwise unacceptable fare for the auction. Photocopied versions of games or books will be confiscated and will not be sold.

•Any items that are left over after check-out on Sunday become the property of TSR, Inc. Excluded from this policy are items that were mailed in by sellers who made provisions for the item's return.

•The auction staff reserves the right to remove anyone who, in the opinion of the auction staff, is being disruptive, or otherwise acting in a manner that interferes with the enjoyment of others at the auction. Also, TSR, Inc. will continue its diligence in apprehending and prosecuting shoplifters.

•Because of the tremendous volume of auction items, the auction staff cannot assume responsibility for items submitted to the auction. We do not accept liability for possible damage or loss of items. (We do try to be careful about this, however.)



AUCTION ORDER FORM

Please fill in this form and send it to the address below if you plan to mail your auction items to us before the Game Fair. You may also use this form to order an auction card and auction forms early to avoid the rush at the auction booth during the Game Fair.

PLEASE CHECK ONE: ☐ I will be ☐ I will not be attending the Game Fair.

Please send me _____ three-part Auction Forms (5 cents each)

Please send me _____ auction card (\$1.00 each)

Please send me _____ plastic bags for my modules and magazines (25 cents each)

If you are **not** attending the Game Fair, do you want us to take the shipping charges for your unsold items out of the proceeds from your items that do sell? ☐ Yes ☐ No

(Answering 'no' means that you must send us a check for the return shipping charges when you send us your items, or the unsold items become the property of TSR, Inc. Send a check equal to **half** of the amount it cost you to mail the items to us.)

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Please enclose a check or money order made payable to TSR, Inc. Return all cards and forms, as well as to mail your items to:

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Lake Geneva, WI 53147
USA**

by Dennis McLaughlin

Sighting In

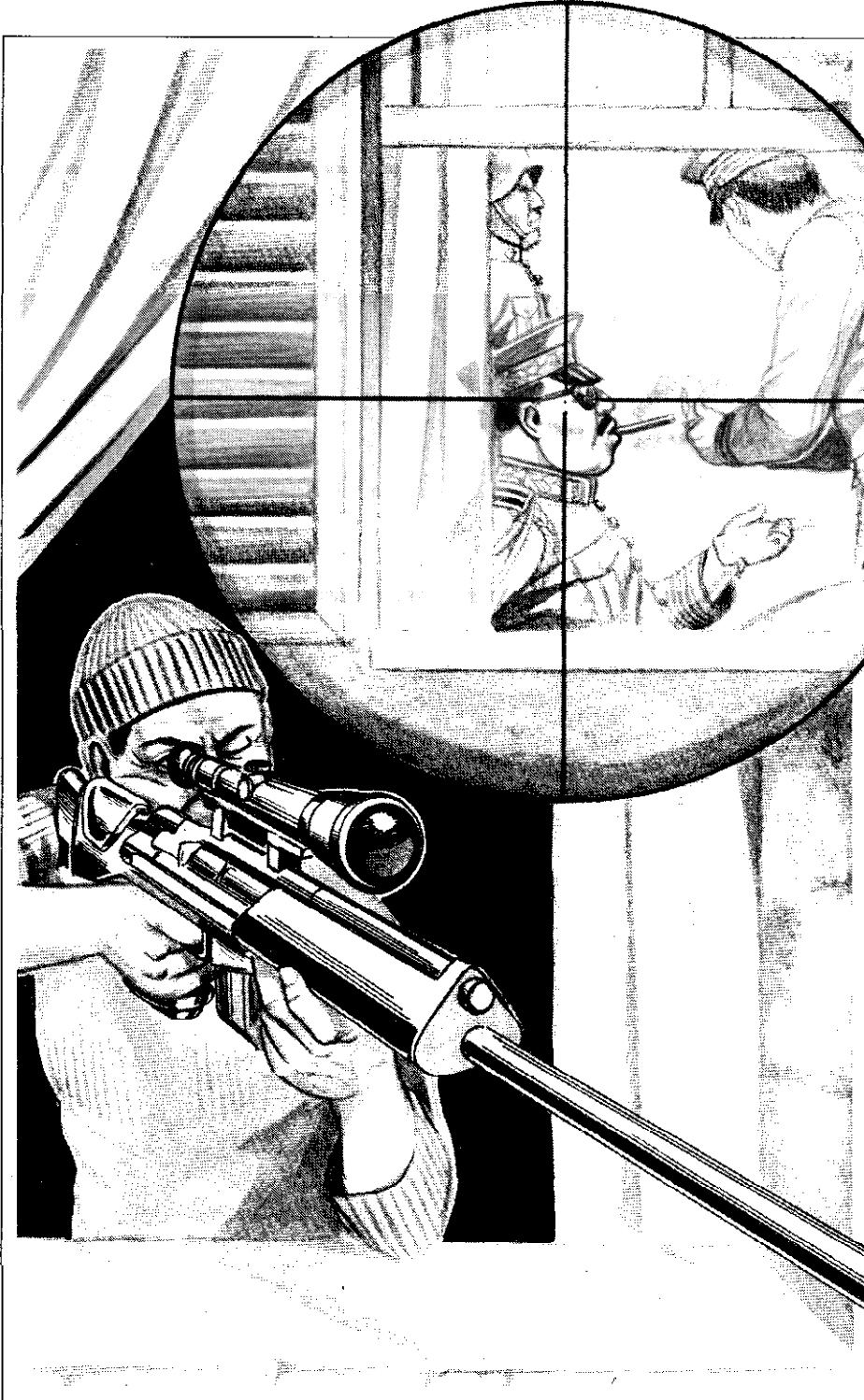


Illustration by Jim Holloway

Assassination, like it or not, is a common practice of military forces and certain espionage agencies in both the real world and in the TOP SECRET® game. It is often the sole purpose of an espionage mission. As a result, a special piece of equipment — the sniper rifle — was developed. This article discusses some of these modern weapons in game terms.

The weapons listed in Tables 1 and 2 are mostly military issue. Sporting rifles can be used for sniping, though often not as effectively as true sniper weapons. Hunting calibers such as the .308 Winchester (7.62 NATO), .223 Remington (5.56 NATO), and 30.06 are the best ones for sniper applications.

Few of these weapons are commercially available, and many are completely inaccessible to all but the best agents, so do not allow TOP SECRET® game agents to simply pick one; sniper rifles must be located and purchased. Weapon descriptions follow.

Steyr SSG-69: This Austrian rifle (which is also available in sporting models) has a very long barrel and is very accurate. *FN 30-11:* Used in Belgium, the FN 30-11 is a handy rifle which can be easily disassembled. It uses the famous Mauser action.

Fusil Model 1: An expensive French weapon that looks like a fine target rifle, the Fusil Model 1 is highly accurate and extremely expensive.

Mauser SP-66: This standard West German sniper rifle is available in many calibers but most commonly in 7.62 NATO.

Parker-Hale 82: One of two British rifles listed here, the Parker-Hale 82 is an accurate, well-made rifle.

Sterling Sniper: This fine British weapon also uses the Mauser action. Except for its single-shot capability, the Sterling Sniper is an exceptional weapon.

Remington 700: One of three sniper rifles in the American arsenal, the Remington 700 is basically the same rifle sold commercially but with a different finish.

M-40A1: This custom-made rifle was designed for the U.S. Marine Corps specifically for sniper use. It is very accurate but cannot be obtained commercially. Besides theft (not recommended, as most guards are authorized to shoot to kill), the only method of obtaining one is to build one to military standards. This is expensive but often worth it.

M-21 Semi-automatic: A sophisticated version of the U.S. M-14, the M-21 SA is similar to the National Match. Although not as accurate as some sniper rifles, this weapon is noted for its reliability.

HK PSG-1: One of the most accurate rifles made for sniping, the HK PSG-1 was made to replace the SP-66. It is capable of ¼" groups at 100 yards, and it is presently being tested for police use in the United States. This

Sniper rifles in the TOP SECRET® game

sniper rifle is very expensive.

HK G-11: Although not actually a sniper rifle, the HK G-11 fires a 4.7mm caseless round that is useful in some sniping situations because there is no spent brass.

Walther WA-2000: This brand-new rifle looks like a futuristic laser. Originally chambered in .300 Magnum, it is also available in 7.5mm Swiss and 7.62 NATO.

Galil Sniping: This weapon is a sniper variation of the Israeli Galil assault rifle, but chambered for 7.62 NATO instead of .223 Remington (5.56 NATO) rounds. The Galil Sniping rifle has a bipod and flash suppressor, as well as a folding stock.

Drugunov SVD: This standard Warsaw Pact sniper rifle has a wooden stock and is fairly accurate. The Drugunov SVD will very likely be the standard weapon of agents from Communist bloc countries. It fires a 7.62 X 54mm round that is different from 7.62 Soviet ammunition.

Remington XP-100: Actually a single-round target-and-hunting pistol, the Remington XP-100's small size and relatively large caliber make it perfect for sniping. This rifle is available in several calibers, such as 7mm and .221 Fireball, but is best suited for sniping in .223 (5.56mm) chambering.

.50 L-RRS: This specially made rifle was designed by Research Armaments, Inc. to meet military standards. It is part of the Long-Range Rifle System (as is the .338/.416 below), and fires the .50 Browning machine-gun round. It is a single-shot rifle; as such, the bolt must be completely removed to reload. Nevertheless, the .50 L-RRS has a devastating capability due to its large caliber. This is not a military-issue rifle; it is a custom-built firearm made at high cost.

.338/.416 L-RRS: Another weapon made by Research Armament Industries, Inc., this rifle uses a .416 cartridge necked down to accept a .338 caliber bullet. Although less powerful than the .50 rifle, the .338/.416 L-RRS is nevertheless an effective firearm. It can be rechambered quickly in the field to 7.62 or 5.56 NATO by changing barrels and bolts. Both rifles are very large and impossible to conceal unless *completely* disassembled.

With the exception of the XP-100, none of these rifles are concealable, and only the FN 30-11 can be broken down for attache-case concealment. However, a character with high AOK in Mechanical Engineering or Military Science/Weaponry would probably be able to strip the weapons into packages small enough for transport. All game statistics given are for the given caliber on the chart. The Administrator's judgment should be used for other calibers.

Table 2 lists specifications for each weapon. "Caliber" is the chambering of a gun; the predominant caliber is listed first. "Weight" is given in pounds and ounces for an unloaded gun without a scope or suppressor. "Action" refers to the rifle's bolt, semi-automatic (SA), or selective-fire (SF) capability (which means the gun can fire single rounds, bursts of rounds, or fully automatic rounds, respectively).

Scopes

There are a variety of telescopic and special-purpose sights on the market today that are perfect for sniping. All are legal, and many are necessary for the weapons to be used correctly. For simplification, it is assumed that none of the weapons above are purchased with scopes already

installed. This allows the player or Administrator to choose the type of scope that best suits the operation at hand. All weapons need to have a scope mount before a scope can be attached. Again for simplicity, it is assumed that rifles come equipped with a mount on which a scope may be placed. Table 3 gives details on various types of scopes.

Telescopic sights are the most common types of scopes, allowing the sniper to observe the target as if through binoculars. Telescopic sights come in a wide variety of powers (magnifications) ranging from 2x to 12x for most scopes, with higher magnifications possible. Also, a number of vari-power scopes are on the market which can be set to any power within their ranges. These sights are extremely useful and deadly. Different sight pictures are also available, though the individual type doesn't influence the TOP SECRET® game's combat system. However, using a scope without a sight picture requires a -5 PWV. The most common types of sight pictures are: cross hair, dot, post, and duplex (a combination of two pictures). Most commercial scopes can be purchased with one or more of these pictures. Special types of scopes include the following:

25x image intensifier: This is actually a small spotting scope used by the sniper's partner. It is too large and unwieldy to mount on a weapon, but if used in conjunction with a scope, it can add +30 (total) to the PWV. The bonus to PWV gained from using a scope is lost by using the image intensifier. The intensifier is powered by batteries and costs \$500.

Thermal sight: This allows the user to "see" the body heat of a target or other heat source. It does not allow the sniper to

Table 1
Sniper Rifle Statistics for the TOP SECRET® Game

Weapon	PWV	- Range Modifier -					WS	Rate	Ammo	Decp	A	C	F	P	R	HWV
		PB	S	M	L											
Steyr SSG-69	88	-5	-15	-2 5	-4 5	S	1	5,10	NC	23	0	4	4	6	14	
FN 30-11	90	-5	-17	-2 7	-4 0	S	1	9	NC	24	0	4	4	6	15	
Fusil F-1	93	-5	-13	-2 3	-3 8	S	1	10	NC	22	0	4	4	6	15	
Mauser SP66	90	-5	-12	-2 3	-3 6	S	1	3	NC	20	0	4	4	6	15	
P-H 82	93	-5	-18	-3 4	-4 1	S	1	4	NC	24	0	4	4	6	15	
Sterling Sniper	93	-5	-16	-3 1	-4 0	S	1	4	NC	23	0	4	4	6	15	
Remington 700	93	-5	-12	-2 5	-3 8	S	1	5	NC	26	0	4	4	6	15	
USMC M-40A1	95	-5	-10	-2 0	-3 5	S	1	5	NC	29	0	4	4	6	15	
M-21 SA	84	-5	-15	-2 8	-4 5	S	6	20	NC	20	0	4	4	2	15	
HK PSG-1	98	-5	-8	-2 1	-3 0	BA	2	5,20	NC	25	0	5	4	2	15	
HK G-11	80	+6	-9	-5 0	-1 0 0	S	2	100	NC	25	0	5	1	3	10	
WA-2000	90	-5	-14	-2 7	-3 3	BA	2	6	NC	26	0	5	4	3	15	
Galil Sniping	83	-5	-16	-2 5	-3 7	A	2	20	NC	26	0	5	4	3	12	
SVD	83	+7	0	-3 5	-9 0	BA	2	10	NC	26	0	5	4	3	15	
Rem. XP-100	85	0	-8	-3 0	-4 5	A	1	1	-10	26	0	5	4	3	12	
.50 L-RRS	95	-1 0	-1 5	-2 5	-3 2	XS	1	1	NC	30	1	1	3	6	16	
.338/.416 L-RRS	93	-1 0	-1 6	-2 5	-3 3	XS	1	1	NC	28	0	4	5	6	16	

XS = Extra slow (-20)

All abbreviations are as per the Weapons Chart on page 21 of the second-edition TOP SECRET® game rule book.

Table 2
Other Sniper Rifle Specifications

Rifle	Caliber	Weight	Action	Cost
Steyr SSG-69	7.62 NATO	10 lb., 2 oz.	Bolt	\$1,050
FN 30-11	7.62 NATO	10 lb., 11 oz.	Bolt	\$2,000
Fusil F-l	7.62 NATO	11 lb., 7 oz.	Bolt	\$1,100
Mauser SP-66	7.62 NATO	13 lb., 2 oz.	Bolt	\$2,000
Parker-Hale 82	7.62 NATO	10 lb., 9 oz.	Bolt	\$1,200
Sterling Sniper	7.62 NATO	9 lb.	Bolt	\$2,100
Remington 700	7.62 NATO	6 lb., 2 oz.	Bolt	\$ 9 5 0
USMC M-40A1	7.62 NATO	14 lb., 8 oz.	Bolt	\$5,000*
M-21 SA	7.62 NATO	8 lb., 2 oz.	SA	\$1,100
HK PSG-1	7.62 NATO	17 lb., 3 oz.	SA	\$5,000
HK G-11	4.7mm caseless	7 lb., 4 oz.	SF	\$1,000
WA-2000	7.62, 7.5, .300	15 lb., 4 oz.	SA	\$3,100
Galil Sniping	7.62 NATO	14 lb., 2 oz.	SA	\$2,300
SVD	7.62 X 54 R	9 lb., 8 oz.	SA	\$1,850
Remington XP-100	5.56 NATO, 7mm	6 lb.	Bolt	\$450
.50 L-RRS	.50 Browning	30 lb.	Bolt	\$7,000*
.338/.416 L-RRS	.338/.416	12 lb., 8 oz.	Bolt	\$6,500*

* Custom-made weapon.

Table 3
Scope Specifications

Scope	PB	Range Modifier				Cost
		S	M	L	MER (meters)	
2x	—	—	+10	+15	300	\$36
2.5x	—	—	+15	+20	375	\$40
3x	—	—	+20	+25	400	\$45
4x	—	—	+25	+30	500	\$48
6x	—	—	+30	+35	600	\$100
7.5x	—	—	+35	+40	1,000	\$120
10x	—	—	+40	+45	1,500	\$250
12x	—	—	+45	+50	1,800	\$275
25xII	—	—	+30	+30	3,500	\$550
Thermal	—	—	+20	+20	500	\$650
Starlight	—	+30	+20	+15	800	\$850
Laser	+50	+40	+30	—	200	\$350
2-6x	—	Vari-power; use individual modifiers				\$150
3-9x	—	Vari-power; use individual modifiers				\$200
9-12x	—	Vari-power; use individual modifiers				\$350

Of course, a scope is useless if the gun is not carefully aimed when it is fired.

distinguish between the true target or a bystander. Although bulky, the thermal sight can be mounted on a gun — at a very high cost, of course.

Starlight scope: This scope is basically a pair of light-intensifier goggles in scope form, allowing the shooter to see outdoor objects at night as if it were daylight. More compact and useful than a thermal sight, the starlight scope is also more expensive. All restrictions for light-intensifier goggles apply to this item.

Laser sight: This is a small laser generator that can be mounted on almost any firearm. When activated, it aims a bright red or orange beam on the exact spot where the bullet will hit. Useful only at short range, the laser sight has the effect

of inducing terror in the person being targeted; the major disadvantage to this is, of course, that the target instantly knows he is a target.

Maximum effective range

The maximum effective range (MER) is the greatest distance at which the target is clearly seen. If the target is beyond a weapon's MER, five points are deducted from the Projectile Weapon Value (PWV) for every 10 yards beyond that limit. For instance, if an agent is using a 2x scope at 340 meters, the scope modifiers (+20) and the MER penalties (-20) cancel each other, producing a less-accurate shot. Naturally, shooting within the MER is desirable.

Suppressors

A noise or flash suppressor is vital to an assassin in the TOP SECRET® game. These instruments give the assassin a much better chance of accomplishing his mission and escaping undetected — sometimes without the assassination even being detected. Table 4 gives various suppressor specifications.

The basic noise suppressor slows down the bullet, which prevents a sonic boom from occurring while simultaneously venting the high-pressure gases creating the gun's report. The added length of a suppressor improves the accuracy of the weapon because the bullet is stabilized on its trip down the longer barrel. Suppressor types are as follows:

Noise: The so-called "silencer" is not accurately a silence-producing item because, as stated above, the suppressor vents the gases of a gunshot and prevents the sonic boom. This results in a 90% reduction in sound, which makes a 7.62 NATO shot sound like a weak "pop" at 100 yards. Noise suppressors can be fitted to any weapon caliber, and they add + 5 to the PWV from their added length. They are available in pistol and rifle/shotgun configurations.

Automatic weapon: A modified rifle suppressor built to withstand automatic fire is necessary for submachine guns or machine pistols, since a standard suppressor is useless after 20 to 30 rounds of automatic fire.

Flash: A flash suppressor is an adapter which fits on the end of a pistol or rifle barrel. It vents the gases from the explosive discharge of the bullet and prevents a bright muzzle blast. This is an absolute must for night operations. A flash suppressor cannot be fitted on an automatic weapon because the rate of fire builds up gases faster than they can be vented.

Noise/flash: A combination of a noise suppressor with a flash-hider on the end is the perfect tool for a sniper rifle; it is, however, very expensive and only lasts for about 15-150 (15d10) shots. Likewise, it is not available for automatic weapons.

Training

To use the above equipment to its full potential, training is required. NPC snipers are assumed to have already been trained, but PCs must spend game time to obtain their training. A PC can gain sniper rifle and equipment experience in two ways: through the military, or through an espionage college. If a PC has prior military experience, the Administrator may allow a roll of 1d100, with a result of 96-00 indicating that prior training has been received. If the PC is currently in the military, he may request reassignment to a sniper school by rolling 1d100 with the results as shown on Table 5. In normal circumstances, no one over the rank of Lieutenant is accepted to a sniper school.

Sniper courses are available at espionage colleges at a cost of \$250 per week for a

Table 4
Suppressor Specifications

Suppressor	PWV Mod	Decp Mods	Length	Cost
Pistol	+5	- 4	6"	\$50
Rifle/shotgun	+5	-16	12"	\$80
Automatic weapon	+5	-12	9"	\$75
Flash	+5	- 2	3"	\$25
Pistol suppressor/flash	+5	- 6	9"	\$150
Rifle suppressor/flash	+5	-18	15"	\$150

Table 5
Reassignment to Sniper School

1d100 Result
01-50 Denied
51-70 Denied, but may reapply in six months
71-90 Put on waiting list for admission (1-6 months)
91-00 Accepted

six-week course. Agents learn to use, assemble, and hide their weapons, as well as fire them accurately and escape detection. Upon completion of an espionage-college education, the agent receives a + 10% bonus in Coordination, Deception, and Evasion when using a sniper weapon, and a \$300 bonus for assassination with a sniper weapon.

Bringing it together

The sniper in the TOP SECRET® game has long been overlooked as a major character in the game. His use of secrecy, suppressors, scopes, and stealth makes him a deadly foe for any agent. PC snipers are also very powerful and should be controlled with a firm hand. Any sniper PC

who performs an assassination without Agency control should be reminded that most countries think of snipers as terrorists, and will punish these criminals with the utmost severity (and the Agency won't lift a finger to help — perhaps even hunting down the renegade with other agents). Above all, remember that the sniper can be the deadliest individual force in the game, and that no PC is truly safe from him. The only thing an agent can do is walk quickly and check the rooftops before crossing the street.

I would like to thank Lt. Col. J.M. Chambers Jr., USMC, and Lt. Col. S.E. McLaughlin, USMC, for their help in researching this article; Charles Chambers, Steve Spain, Mike McCarty, and

Kevin Brown for suggestions; and the Second Marine Division Scout Sniper/STA School, MCB Camp Lejeune, N.C., for supplying information on the M-40A1.

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I'M THE NO-SASE OGRE.



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by Steve Winter

The Game Wizards

Zombies, dinosaurs, and SNIPER!™ games



Like a lot of people at TSR, Inc., I played wargames long before I had ever heard of role-playing games. After I got involved in role-playing, wargames took a back seat. Now that RPGs are my livelihood, I find more and more of my personal gaming time is again spent with wargames.

Unfortunately, some RPG players have an attitude problem about wargames. While the roots of this problem are unfathomable by me, its symptoms are easily recognized: Its victims won't play wargames. I believe that these people simply haven't been exposed to the *right* wargames. They need to check out the SNIPER!™ games from TSR.

SNIPER!™ games deal with 20th-century combat at the man-to-man level. Each counter represents a single man or a single vehicle. A player usually controls a squad of infantry plus its support weapons. So far, there are three games in the line: the SNIPER!™ game, HETZER, and SPECIAL FORCES. The SNIPER!™ game covers World War II, the Korean War, the Vietnam War, and contemporary Europe in broad strokes. HETZER focuses on Western Europe in World War II. SPECIAL FORCES concentrates on contemporary situations throughout the world, with an emphasis on insurgency and terrorism. HETZER and SPECIAL FORCES, having a much narrower scope than the SNIPER!™ game, have correspondingly greater detail.

The fourth (and probably final) game in the series will be BUG HUNTER (as in, "Is this gonna be a stand-up fight, sir, or just another bug hunt?"). This is a science-fiction game of desperate combat between humans and alien monsters. The maps portray 12 decks of a spaceship on one side and a planetary colony on the other. The aliens run the gamut from lone, night-marish killers to hordes of crawling larvae. The humans are either lightly armed colonists and space crews or heavily armed marines. Typically, the colonists have too little firepower to deal with the aliens and the marines have too much.

Something completely different

I have role-playing friends who occasionally play wargames, but with the attitude that "If it really happened, I don't want to play the game." That's fine if your wargaming is limited to science-fiction and heroic-fantasy titles, but sometimes it's nice to try something new. With that in mind, I present three new, multiplayer scenarios for any SNIPER!™ game: "Dash for the Stash," "The Longest Day (of the Dead)," and "Blast from the Past."

Dash for the Stash

This scenario can accommodate any number of players from two on up. It is a free-for-all in which each player tries to grab the stash from the middle of the board and escape with it.

First, the players must decide whether they want to play a pre-1960 scenario or a

post-1960 scenario. (Automatic weapons proliferate in the post-1960 scenario, making it much more dangerous.) Each player then rolls two dice. The high roller selects one of the squads listed below; subsequent choices are made by the other players in descending-roll order.

Pre-1960 forces

German: 6 BR, 2 MP, 1 MG, 1 RL or FT; track B

French: 8 BR, 2 MP, 1 AR, 1 RL or FT; track D

British: 5 BR, 4 MP, 1 AR, 1 RL or FT; track C

U.S. Army: 10 SR, 1 AR, 1 RL or FT; track C

USMC: 8 SR, 2 AR, 1 RL or FT track B

Japanese: 13 BR, 1 AR, 1 FT; track D

Soviets: 6 BR, 3 MP, 2 AR, 1 FT; track E

ChiCom: 5 BR, 4 MP, 1 AR, 1 RL or FT; track C

Post-1960 forces

U.S. or NATO (any): 8 AW, 1 MG, 1 GL or FT; track C

Viet Cong: 5 AW, 3 MP, 1 AR, 1 RL or FT; track C

Warsaw Pact (any): 9 AW, 1 MG, 1 RL or FT; track D

Israelis: 9 AW, 2 AR, 1 RL or FT; track B
Third World regulars (any): 8 AW, 3 AR, 2 RL; track D

Guerillas (any): 5 AW, 4 MP, 2 AR, 1 RL or FT; track D

Terrorists (any): 8 AW, 6 MP, 1 RL; track E

In addition, each player gets two satchel charges. The stash is represented by a flare marker. Place it, by mutual consent of the players, somewhere near the center of the map. It can be on the upper floor of a building, in the basement, or out in the open, as long as players agree. Next, each player chooses an entry area (reversing the order in which squads were chosen). This entry area consists of all map-edge hexes in one map area. All players set up their squads along their chosen edges.

During the turn, players perform their rounds in the order determined during the Initiative step. The first shot of the game does not trigger universal panic checks. Preservation limits do not apply. No combat tasks are allowed during the first turn (this gives everyone a chance to get to cover).

The stash can be picked up and carried like a weapon, exchanged, or dropped. The squad that carries the stash off the map along its entry area wins the game.

The Longest Day (of the Dead)

The platoon is back, and it's dead! One player controls a terrified, hunted group of humans. The other player controls a horde of rotting zombies who hunger for human flesh.

The human player can choose any nationality he wants. He gets six BRs and two SGs (generating ratings and scores as usual). The humans use activation track B

and have no grenades.

The zombie player chooses a different nationality and randomly selects 40 soldiers. The zombie player is only concerned with activation ratings; weapons, panic, and abilities are irrelevant to zombies.

The human player chooses one building in which to set up in any manner he wishes. All zombies are then set up at least five hexes away from the building.

As you might expect, there are some special rules regarding zombies:

- * Zombies use activation track F.
- * Zombies move as if wounded (they are dead, after all).
- * Zombies never get any defensive multiple from movement.
- * A standing zombie can cross a window hexside on a die roll of 1. Any other roll means the zombie does nothing that round.
- * Panic and Wound results have no effect on zombies.
- * Zombies are never stunned.
- * An "I" result knocks the zombie prone but has no other effect.
- * A "K" result destroys the zombie completely; remove its body.
- * Zombies are never isolated.
- * Zombies have no leaders.
- * Zombies can only attack in hand-to-hand combat. They always attack using the MG column of the Hand-to-Hand Combat Results table, and they never have any weapon modifiers.
- * If any human is wounded by a zombie, the zombie player rolls two dice during every Artillery Impact phase. On a roll of 11 or 12, that soldier becomes a zombie under the control of the zombie player. He cannot use his weapon but retains his activation rating.

All normal rules apply to the humans: activation, panic, leadership, etc. The only exception is that the humans are not subject to preservation effects.

The human player wins if any humans survive. The zombie player wins if all of the humans are killed or become zombies.

If the zombies seem to win all the time, give the humans one MP in place of a BR. If the humans seem to win all the time, allow a human to run completely out of ammunition if he rolls a two on the Fire Combat Results table.

Blast from the Past

A Behemosauros Rex is attacking Snipertown, and negotiations have failed! This is a short solitaire scenario in which the player controls the army forces trying to kill B. Rex (or at least drive him away).

The behemosauros rex (a prehistoric monster so frightening that its existence has never been announced to the public) is represented by two truck pieces. These pieces, which actually represent the creature's feet, are initially placed near the center of the map, within five hexes of

each other.

The player draws his squad from any nationality of his choice. He gets six BR, three MG, three RL or FT, two APCs (with crews), two tanks (with crews), and four satchel charges. Activation tracks and individual ratings are determined with the standard procedure. Preservation limits do not apply.

B. Rex has an activation rating of 1 and uses activation track A. Every time he moves, roll two dice in sequence. The first die indicates what direction B. Rex moves his foot. The second die result, doubled, indicates how far in hexes B. Rex moves his foot. B. Rex moves his right foot first, then alternates right and left for the rest of the game.

A few simple rules guide the placement of B. Rex's feet:

- * All movement of the feet is counted from the right front hex of the piece. Before moving the foot, rotate the piece around its right front hex so that it points in the direction of movement.
- * The right front hexes of B. Rex's feet can never be more than 12 hexes apart. If the dice indicate that the feet should be moved farther apart, they move to 12 hexes and stop.
- * B. Rex's feet never leave the map. If the dice indicate a foot should be moved off the map, it stops at the map edge.
- * If a foot lands inside a building, every room containing any part of the foot is demolished to ground level. Place smoke markers in demolished rooms. Every soldier or vehicle in a room when it is demolished is killed or destroyed. Treat a demolished room as dense rough #2 terrain.
- * Any soldier or vehicle that winds up wholly or partially beneath one of B. Rex's feet is killed or destroyed.

Whenever B. Rex is activated with chit 1, he exhales a blast of intense fire. Roll one die to determine where he breathes:

- | | |
|-----------|-----------|
| 1: area A | 4: area E |
| 2: area B | 5: area F |
| 3: area C | 6: area G |

Every soldier in the open in that area is attacked once on the "5" column of the Combat Results table. Every soldier in a building or vehicle is attacked on the "1" column. Every vehicle is attacked as if it were hit on the front by a rocket launcher.

Any unit with a line of sight to one of B. Rex's feet can attack the creature. The feet have an inherent defense value of 5, which is never modified. Results are compounded continuously; two Ws make an I, and two Is make a K. P results have no effect. B. Rex flees when 10 K results have been accumulated against it. (You didn't think you could *kill* it, did you?)

The human player wins if B. Rex flees before it has trashed 20 rooms. Otherwise, B. Rex wins.

Ω

Role-playing Reviews



In the Lands of the Rising Sun

This month, let's go Oriental and try some games based on Japanese fantasy instead of some European version. You can play samurai, ninja, magic-users, or priests (the latter are not allowed to kill). Just think about the way of the warrior in a land where your honor is worth more than your life. We can have a great time with that fancy armor for the samurai, neat gimmicks for the ninja, and loads of new spells.

But you also have terrible constraints on your character. Some local *daimyo* always tells you what to do. You don't get much freedom of action, and if you screw up (which may happen frequently), you may have to destroy your character. It's not like the West, with feudalism, big castles, rambling dungeon complexes, and orcs.

Role-playing in fantasy variants of Europe presents few problems for West-

ern gamers. We all have some knowledge of life in the Middle Ages or ancient times. Whether we gained our information from reading history or fantasy books, or from watching movies, it translates readily to our own gaming worlds. The image of the armored knight is one with which we can all identify. Similarly, the spell-casting wizard, the devout cleric, and the sneaky thief are all familiar to us. We recognize the setting: Strong, stone castles and walled towns dot the landscape; merchants ply their trades in towns; and adventurers travel the rivers and roads of the world in search of wealth.

Our own motivations are easily transferred to the fantasy world. While the modern world colors our thoughts and ambitions, it doesn't pose any great barrier when it comes to having a good time slicing up orcs or blowing away skeletons.

The setting encourages a free-wheeling attitude among player characters. Lust for adventure often takes precedence over social ties. Player characters cheerfully take on the roles of troubleshooters or wandering mercenaries. Adventurers rarely owe allegiance to anyone other than their fellow adventurers and possibly to their religious leaders. Ready to oppose evil forces for combat and monetary rewards, the PCs wander the world in pursuit of power and excitement. All in all, European fantasy is easily accessible, and actions are based on a character's alignment or individual conscience.

To the East

Now, let's board a vessel and head east to the mysterious Orient — Japan in particular. Here we enter a different world: the houses are made from paper, and active volcanoes are commonplace. But it is more than the architecture and landscape that makes the Orient different. The people who inhabit the lands of the East behave differently. Their lives are directed by *giri* (roughly translated as "honor" or "duty") and by *karma*.

Giri: Free will, while not totally absent, takes second place to Oriental social obligation. The saying "Death is a feather, duty is a mountain" sums up many of the ways of the East. An Oriental character is expected to abide by traditional customs and to faithfully complete any tasks assigned by superiors. *Giri*, one's duty, is all-encompassing and deeply rooted; it must be fulfilled, even if doing so would bring death or dishonor to a character. Characters' obligations to their lord take precedence over personal wishes and can at time conflict. The honorable path is that of *giri*.

Honor: Honor is of primary importance to Oriental characters. A loss of honor brings a loss of face. A character without honor is despised by others and, more importantly, possesses little or no self-esteem. To live without honor is to live in perpetual shame. People go to great extremes to regain lost honor, even by embarking on suicidal missions, tracking down enemies, and facing fearsome monsters. One other way is to perform *seppuku* — ritualistic suicide.

Seppuku: This is the ultimate action available to dishonored characters and to those in situations in which they are faced with an unavoidable loss of honor. Death by one's hand was once widely accepted as the only honorable course of action in such situations. *Seppuku* could also be performed to demonstrate the evil or dishonorable acts of one's lord, or to display a hatred for a powerful foe. People would willingly carry out these actions, believing it was their *karma* to do so.

Karma: Karma is the belief that everything that happens to a person is due to his actions in a previous life. Life is preor-

dained, but failure to strive to the best of one's abilities stores up bad karma for the next incarnation. To this end, perfection in all things is a primary concern. Whether it is the use of the sword or the pen, honorable characters strive to do their best.

Courtly graces: Miyamoto Musashi, one of the most famous warriors of his day, wrote that "the warrior's is the twofold Way of pen and sword, and he should have a taste for both Ways." Unlike his relatively uncouth Western counterpart, the Oriental warrior dedicated himself to more than just the way of the sword. The ability to wield a pen was just as important as the ability to slice an enemy. The cultured samurai was proficient in the art of calligraphy, the game of go, poetry, drama, the tea ceremony, and other pursuits. Oriental warriors devoted themselves to achieving perfection, channeling their ki to achieve their best.

Ki: Ki translates roughly as "spirit." It is an inner power which may be drawn upon when performing warlike and peaceful arts. Ki allows feats to be performed that would normally be beyond a person's capabilities. In the modern world, ki can be seen in the power of a martial artist to break concrete slabs with his hand and in the ease with which an aikido master throws an attacker. This inner reservoir of power may be developed over time, allowing truly heroic feats to be performed. Those who can channel their ki effectively seem to frequently achieve the impossible.

Beliefs: Oriental beliefs did not develop in isolation to society; they are an intrinsic part of it. Honor and giri determine how the warriors of the Orient think and act. By placing warriors in a strict relationship to their social superiors, honor and giri work to ensure the supremacy of the nobility.

Oriental warriors cannot act without considering the effects of their actions on the honor of their lords and families, so they are not free to do as they wish. Every action has to be weighed in terms of its consequences. To act wrongly is to bring dishonor on all family members. This makes for careful consideration when carrying out any action. For example, even an action which seems to be the only one available in terms of self-survival or advancement must be carefully weighed against the lord's wishes and the continuing honor of the family. To act out of selfishness is to act without honor.

Is Oriental society one of unthinking self-sacrifice and heavily constrained actions? On the face of it, it would appear so, but there is plenty of room for free action. Normally, only the samurai are so tightly constrained. Before going into this further, here's a quick look at ancient Japanese society.

Historical Japan

Throughout most of Japanese history, a caste system existed. At times, it was rig-

idly maintained; at other times, it was possible for a lowly commoner to attain great power. The caste system divided Japanese society into four castes: the nobility, the *buke*, the *heimin*, and the *eta*.

The nobility included the personage of the Emperor and his close family. The Emperor was descended from the gods and was considered to be a divine being, yet his political power was greatly curtailed by the *buke* (samurai). This warrior class controlled the military power of Japan — power which was invested in the shogun.

The shogun was originally a war leader chosen by the Emperor to lead the imperial armies in times of war. But the powerful samurai families were reluctant to relinquish this position in more peaceful times. Eventually, the shogun developed into a hereditary office, and the Emperor became a mere figurehead. He still ratified the shogun's appointment, often at the point of a sword, but the Emperor lacked real power. It even became common for the Emperor to abdicate in favor of his heir, usually a child who had no choice other than to follow the dictates of the shogun.

While real power lay in the hands of the shogun, the shogun himself relied on support from his daimyos, or clan heads. A strong shogun could impose his will throughout Japan; a weak one only exercised control within his own family lands. Outside of this area, the daimyos vied with each other for power and strived to seize the shogunate for themselves. A complicated system of alliances developed as daimyos sought allies to support their cause. Treachery and intrigue became rife, with families working within (and often beyond) the constraints of giri to better their positions.

While the samurai families employed military might and a network of spies and informants against each other, the rest of society carried on as best it could. The *heimin* comprised the peasantry, the artisans, and merchants. From this class came the warriors who formed the bulk of the samurai armies: peasants who had run away from their lands to find a better life. At the bottom of the pile were the *eta* — the unclean — who carried out those tasks beneath the rest of society, such as butchering animals, burying the dead, cleaning the streets, entertaining the samurai and *heimin*, and other lowly occupations.

Not all of the people of Japan lived within the caste system, however. Priests were accorded a certain measure of respect, but were firmly beneath the rank of samurai. The temples, with their armed *sohei* (warrior monks), were a potent force. At times, armies of *sohei* clashed with those from rival temples and with samurai armies.

Ronin were masterless samurai who were called "wave-men" because events washed them back and forth across Japan like the waves of the sea. Samurai could

become ronin following the death of their lords or by being dismissed from service for a variety of reasons. Often, ronin strived to uphold the ways of the samurai, but many also turned to banditry and other illegal occupations. Free of the constraints of society, ronin could act as they pleased and were feared because of it.

The yakuza, criminals who ran protection rackets, gambling, and other elements of organized crime, formed a society within a society. Organized into clans, the yakuza served the *oyabun* (clan head) in much the same way as a samurai served his lord. Some yakuza gangs even looked after the *heimin* within their area, protecting them from the samurai and rampaging bandits.

Magic-users in Japanese fables existed outside of Japanese social codes, often living as hermits who were physically separated from society. Their powers set them apart but insured respect; no one wanted to be the victim of a magic-user's curse.

No overview of Japanese society would be complete without the ninja. Ninja were organized in clans and had their own codes of conduct. While despised by the samurai, the ninja were frequently employed by them in their struggles for power. Ninja were ideal for those jobs that a samurai's honor prevented him from performing — terrorism, assassination, and spying. As masters of disguise, with a wide array of special combat techniques and weapons at their disposal, the ninja were ideally suited to their role.

All of these people worked within the constraints of Japanese society, finding their own niches and defending their own territories. While free of the pressures of the samurai, they had their own codes of conduct which frequently mirrored the ways of their samurai masters.

Oriental role-playing games

To be successful, an Oriental RPG must balance PC freedom with the obligations of giri and honor. Characters have to feel that they are part of a society different from our own. They must act in ways consistent to the beliefs of Oriental society, but the players must be able to enjoy the freedom to which they are accustomed in games inspired by the West.

The inclusion of yakuza, ninja, magic-users, and priests provides this to a certain extent. Characters wishing to be free of the rigorous constraints placed on the samurai can always choose one of these character types. But without the existence of samurai, Oriental games simply become variants of more traditional RPGs.

Systems for honor can overcome many of the problems inherent in being a samurai. Rating a character's honor by assessing abstract point values allows a player a large measure of freedom, as honor can then be increased or decreased during play. A character placed in a difficult situation can afford to sacrifice some

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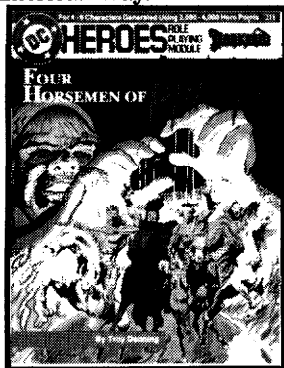
June 4th, 1988

Number 11

THE PREMIERE OF THE AWESOME INCREDIBLE CHECKLIST

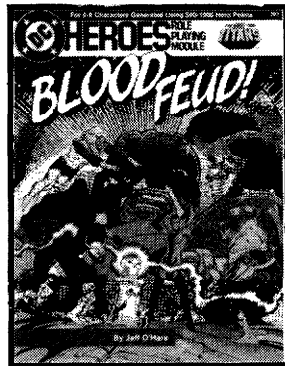
You have asked us to start putting more information about our adventures in this gaming supplement. Okay. Now every DPGS will have a section called the: CHECKLIST. (Original, eh?) We'll fit in a description of either a sourcebook or an adventure every month. The listing will vary between the older and newer modules, so you'll eventually have a description of the whole line.

To kick this off we're going to describe not one, not two, but a perfectly ridiculous *six* modules. Just to prove we believe in excess, as well as "Truth, Justice and the American Way."TM



□ FOUR HORSEMEN OF APOKOLIPSTM:

This module features the first appearance of Darkseid'sTM minions: WarTM, FamineTM, PestilenceTM, and DeathTM, who are also in the Legion of Super-HeroesTM adventure, *King For All Time*. Darkseid and DesaadTM have placed these warriors at the four corners of modern day Earth, and your equivalent of the Justice League of AmericaTM or Justice League InternationalTM must stop them destroying the world.

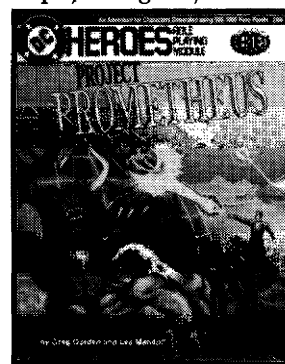


□ BLOOD FEUD

The reviewer at *White Dwarf* magazine called this, "The best super hero adventure I've ever seen."

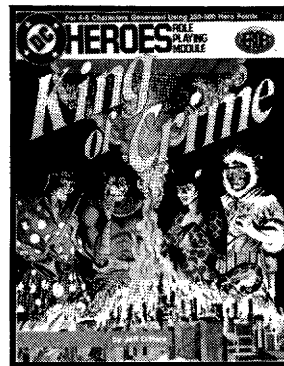
The Teen TitansTM battle against the New Brotherhood of EvilTM in defense of Brother BloodTM. Not only is there plenty of action, there is the moral dilemma of defending a villain who assaulted and tortured you. It's an archetypal adventure about what it means to be a hero.

Blood Feud contains stats and bios for the New Brotherhood of Evil: BrainTM, Monsieur MallahTM, PhobiaTM, WarpTM, HouniganTM, PlasmusTM.



□ PROJECT PROMETHEUS

A powerful new weapon has been created and your heroes fly to Crete to investigate and neutralize any threat. Power-mad villains, political manipulations, a murder, slugfests, and an airstrike are all part of this deadly mission.



□ KING OF CRIME

This is one of our favorite modules. It has everything you could want in a DCTM Heroes Role-Playing Game adventure, from the Carmine Infantino portrait of some of the members of Flash's Rogues' GalleryTM gloating over a burning Central CityTM to histories and stats on the members of the Secret Society of Super-VillainsTM.

This version of the society includes GoldfaceTM, Captain ColdTM, CheetahTM, ChronosTM, CopperheadTM, Golden GliderTM, Killer MothTM, Matter MasterTM, Mirror MasterTM, Pied PiperTM, Shadow ThiefTM, and the SharkTM. Your heroes must stop them from looting Central CityTM.



□ FIRE AND ICE

The Fearsome FiveTM (JinxTM, ShimmerTM, GizmoTM, and MammothTM) races against eight other villains to the top of the world to battle for the secrets of a crashed alien spaceship. Your heroes are caught in the middle. *Fire and Ice* has a great George Perez cover.



□ ETERNITY, INC.

People turning into Sabretooth tigers? Ancient Neanderthal shamans and Gorilla GroddTM attempting to send the world back in time? Infinity, Inc.TM in the Pleistocene Age? Yes, all this and more. *Eternity, Inc.* sports a great cover by Denys Cowan.

Well that's the first CHECKLIST. Next time we'll have stats for the new ManhunterTM, our summer convention schedule, and a CHECKLIST entry for *Wheel of Destruction*.

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honor in the knowledge that, by performing honorable actions later, he can restore the lost honor or even increase it. Players therefore receive a fair degree of latitude in determining how their characters act. By being familiar with the workings of the honor system, it is possible to role-play the samurai effectively and to enjoy the intricacies of Oriental adventure.

The availability of ki powers is also essential. The Oriental character must have that extra something which Western characters lack. The feeling of being able to do something really special has lots of appeal. It's that extra ability which sets a character apart from others. How ki powers are defined is also a big consideration. Ki powers are of little use if they do not allow impressive feats to be performed, as more mundane actions could simply be a result of special tricks picked up here and there.

Oriental games must "feel" Oriental. The game's background must come across in a satisfying manner, and the character classes available must be Oriental, not renamed copies of their Western counterparts.

All these factors have influenced the three games under consideration this month. Let's see how they measure up.

BUSHIDO game

Fantasy role-playing game
Fantasy Games Unlimited \$18.00
Design: Paul Hume and Bob Charrette

The BUSHIDO game was the first game to open up the mysterious East to role-players — but at a cost. While admirably capturing the flavor of medieval Japan, the BUSHIDO game is densely written and difficult to grasp. It is a game for dedicated gamers who, in their pursuit of Oriental action, are willing to struggle with rule books that make advanced nuclear theory texts seem like light reading by comparison.

The rules are presented using a numbered case system, the type of presentation associated with complicated wargames. This would not be too bad in itself, provided the rules were ordered in a logical fashion — but they're not. On opening the rule book, the reader is presented with a character design system which makes no reference to the character types available, and makes no attempt to deal with the system in anything more than an abstract way.

Meanwhile, you plow your way through pages dealing with improving attributes, saving throws, abilities, general information on brawling, climbing, swimming, and a section on skills and how to improve them. This is all very interesting, but it is still out of context. We are then treated to a weighty section on status and its uses. Just before the section on characters comes the lowdown on honor and experience points.

Reading through all this material is hard work. Concepts spring out of the rules

without being placed properly in context. At least two readings of the rule book are required before it is possible to put this information into any usable format.

To a large extent, the BUSHIDO game can be forgiven its bad organization; it's an old game that is clearly aimed at the hardcore gamer. A revamping and reordering of this material would go a long way to making the game more accessible. Compared to more recent games, the BUSHIDO game is a work of enthusiasm, with little or no thought given to presentation or ease of use. In terms of accessibility, it barely scrapes in at the bottom of the scale.

Having gotten that out of the way, is there anything in this game to justify the amount of brain-ache involved in fathoming its systems? Well, yes. The BUSHIDO game is emphatically stamped with an Oriental feel. Players can take on the roles of samurai, *bushi* (warriors who are not samurai), ronin, *shugenja* (magic-users), *gakusho* (priests), *yakuza*, *budoka* (unarmed-combat specialists), and ninja. The background sections are presented at a higher standard than the rules themselves. The history of Nippon (this game's fantasy Japan) and the structure of society are clearly explained, as are customs and religious beliefs.

Character design: This is difficult and involved. Expect to do this at least twice before you are able to create a reasonable character. Some examples would have been a great help here. Having decided on character type and allocated the points to abilities, it's time to roll on the birth table to determine social origins. As random rolls can lead to a wide variation in the social standing of PCs, GMs should dispense with the dice rolls and instead tailor PCs' origins to the campaign.

The game's mechanics work fairly well but are convoluted in places. Striving for realism, the designers have sacrificed playability in a few places. The combat system allows for a number of tactical options — characters can swing, thrust, and deliver a butt stroke with the shafts of certain weapons. It is reminiscent of a set of skirmish rules, and while being slow, it works well enough.

Ki powers: The ki powers provided in the BUSHIDO game are both general (available to all characters) and specific (with special powers available to each character class). While not being immediately accessible, ki is gained as characters increase in experience levels and master skills, making limited amounts of ki available after a few gaming sessions.

General ki powers allow characters to maintain consciousness, avoid death, improve saving throws, and enhance abilities, skills, and saving throws against magic. Specific powers allow warriors to increase the amount of damage inflicted, improve armor class, and act more quickly in combat. Ninja may use their ki to become invisible, secrete poison from

their hands, or resist the effects of poisons, heat, and cold. Nicely tailored to each character's abilities, ki powers are one of the BUSHIDO game's strong points.

Karma: If a PC dies, any karma gained during the character's adventuring career may be used to enhance the player's next character. Karma points are based on the amount of ki and honor possessed, and on the manner of the character's death. These points are then added to the next character's attribute points or used to influence a die roll on the birth table.

Honor: Honor is a measure of a character's personal esteem; it is a necessary requirement for characters to gain levels. A character with honor insufficient to attain the next level is frozen at his current level until he gains the requisite amount of honor. A character who later loses honor may find himself reduced in level until the loss is made good!

Characters also possess status, which is used when dealing with NPCs and is a measure of a character's standing within society. While it could have been integrated into honor, it has been given a life of its own, reflecting the designers' desire for realistic systems but adding to the book work involved in running a PC.

Ninja: As social outcasts, ninja do not adventure with other PCs. GMs wishing to run ninja should dispense with the birth table and instead assign ninja characters to

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the players. The secret aspects and outcast status of ninja make them unsuitable for use in campaigns with other character types; no samurai would ever adventure with a ninja. However, their special powers do make ninja particularly attractive characters to play, and GMs could easily run two campaigns allowing players to take on the role of ninja in one and other character types in another.

Evaluation: The BUSHIDO game does work, but expect to spend long hours figuring out *how*. It provides a detailed combat system which adequately represents Oriental combat. The BUSHIDO game has a number of innovative features which allow characters to participate in mass battles and to train between adventures. Its magic rules and background feel right. However, the BUSHIDO game lacks any real support; only two adventure-supplements exist, and neither are recent releases.

If you're looking for a stand-alone system, then check out the BUSHIDO game. But if accessibility and ease of use are your primary requirements, stay well away. The two other supplements under review this month are superior models of presentation, and they build upon tried and tested systems. The BUSHIDO game is for those who like complication for complication's sake.

Land of Ninja

RUNEQUEST® game supplement

Created and developed by Chaosium Inc.;
published by The Avalon Hill Game
Company (USA) and Games Workshop
(UK) \$16.00

Design: Bob Charrette and Sandy Petersen
Editing: Charlie Krank and Sandy Petersen
Major contributions: Dave Farnsworth and
Anders Swenson

Land of Ninja is a supplement for the third-edition RUNEQUEST® game and is firmly based on historical Japan. In line with the third-edition RUNEQUEST game's realistic feel, *Land of Ninja* provides an overview of the various periods of Japanese history. It encourages GMs to base their campaign in whatever period appeals most to them and their players.

The game rules smoothly transfer the RUNEQUEST game to Nihon (this game's fantasy Japan). Players need to be conversant with the existing RUNEQUEST game rules, as *Land of Ninja* only provides those rules necessary for Oriental play. Various types of characters are available: samurai, *ashigaru* (peasant warriors), sorcerers, priests, thieves, and ninja.

It is possible to play the more mundane characters — crafters, entertainers, peasants, merchants, physicians, and sailors — but the caste system of Nihon severely curtails their freedom. The main thrust of the rules is geared toward samurai, *ashigaru*, and ronin campaigns, with sorcerers and priests tagging along. This trend is most apparent in the three provided

adventures, which are all oriented toward samurai in service to a lord.

To help players feel at home, a list of names and places of origin are provided. Character design follows the normal RUNEQUEST game procedure, and the addition of new skills (such as arrow cutting and fast draw) give characters a distinctly Japanese cast. Notably, there are no rules for unarmed combat. This is strange as one of the attractions of the Orient is the widespread practice of unarmed-combat techniques. There's definitely room for expansion here.

Background: Sections of society, families and clans, customs, and religion present the background in a clear and concise manner. Rather than laboring the intricacies of Japanese society, the designers have let authentic Orientals speak for them in the form of quotes extracted from learned Japanese texts. These quotes help to get the flavor across in a readily accessible form, and a glossary of terms helps to guide the newcomer through Oriental language and terminology.

Ki powers: Ki powers are not generally available; only those characters who have mastered their profession by achieving a skill rating of 90% have access to ki powers. The average NPC is unable to use them, and PCs will have to strive hard before they are able to employ their own sources of inner energy. I would have preferred ki abilities to be more easily attainable as they are such an integral part of Oriental adventuring. Even those characters who do possess ki powers have to wait a long while before they can use them effectively.

To use ki, one or more magic points are expended and the skill is rolled as normal. If the result is the same as or lower than your ki score, you have been successful. Ki powers allow characters in combat to automatically cause critical hits. Armed with a nunchaku (rice flails connected by short lengths of chain) or a jo stick (a short wooden staff), you can make additional attacks until you fail your ki roll. In the hands of characters with high ki scores, this can make for devastating combat.

An area in which *Land of Ninja's* ki powers excel is in their applicability to noncombat skills. This allows characters to produce wondrous works of art imbued with magical abilities or to track a foe in otherwise impossible conditions. It's a pity that characters have to be so highly skilled before these additional powers take effect.

Honor: This is simple to use and keep track of. You start with no honor, regardless of family ties, and either work your way up or down. (That's right; you can have negative honor and be so dishonorable that people fear you.)

Seppuku is not directly tied to honor; it's really up to you when you throw away your PC. But be careful: Too cavalier an attitude to one's personal honor, particularly when it reflects on your family and lord, could bring a request for your PC to

commit seppuku. Honor also affects dealings with social superiors: The higher your honor, the easier it is to have superiors grant you a favor or have them defend you in times of need.

Ninja: As in the BUSHIDO game, ninja are only available as PCs in ninja-based campaigns. Whether used in this fashion or as NPCs, ninja (along with their special abilities and gimmicks) are fully described.

The adventures: These are well-presented and offer a variety of situations primarily for use with samurai players. There are plenty of opportunities for players to become involved in intrigue and detective work. The requirements of honor have been integrated into the adventures with good effect. Prying too closely or accusing someone without solid evidence can place you in a tricky situation. As you've been sent on these missions by your lord, failure or social blunders reflect badly on him, so if you want to emerge with honor unscathed, tread carefully.

I have access only to the Games Workshop edition of *Land of Ninja*, so I cannot comment on the Avalon Hill edition. However, although maps are referenced in the text, I cannot find any in the book. This makes running these adventures difficult, to say the least.

Evaluation: *Land of Ninja* has some strong features to recommend it to RUNEQUEST game players. Its neat handling of the background makes it readily accessible to those already familiar with RUNEQUEST games. The transition from West to East is done smoothly. If you don't want to abandon existing characters, Western characters can easily travel to Nihon and adventure in this environment.

For those of you who don't already play RUNEQUEST games, *Land of Ninja's* use is more limited. The RUNEQUEST game system is slick in places and slow in others, particularly when it comes to combat. Try standard RUNEQUEST games first, and if they appeal to you, you'll love *Land of Ninja*.

Oriental Adventures

AD&D® game supplement

TSR, Inc.

\$15.00

Design: David "Zeb" Cook

Editing: Steve Winter, Mike Breault, Anne Gray, and Thad Russell

As one of the most popular RPGs in the world, it was only natural that the AD&D® game should make the transition to the Orient. And it makes the change with style. New character classes and spells admirably capture the flavor of the Orient, and the inclusion of nonhuman character types gives *Oriental Adventures* the strongest flavor of all the Oriental RPG systems described here.

Character classes: As befits the AD&D game's style, a wide variety of character classes is available — Oriental equivalents of the standard ones, plus some specials like the kensai and sohei.

These character classes are well conceived and fit smoothly into the existing system. They include bushi (peasant warriors), *kensai* (masters of the sword or another chosen weapon), the samurai, the Oriental barbarian (similar to the one in *Unearthed Arcana*), the shukenja (priests who are forbidden to kill, and who gain experience points for healing NPCs), the *wu jen* (the Oriental magic-user — much tougher and with a wider range of weapons than its Western counterpart), and the yakuza. The monk has been revised to fit snugly into the Oriental world. Ki powers replace the monk's ability to avoid magical damage, and the monk's martial-arts training is handled in a more logical fashion. The monk is now well and truly where it belongs.

No Oriental game would be complete without the ninja. To be a ninja, a character must qualify for one of the "normal" classes as well as that of the ninja class. In keeping with their secret nature, ninja use their normal class as a cover identity. They may adventure with other characters, but they must be careful to keep their ninja identities secret, as loss of honor (and sudden death) may occur if the PC is unmasked.

Martial arts: Monks are not the only characters who have access to martial arts. All characters may study them, providing they can find masters to teach them. Monks and shukenja, however, start their adventuring lives with some martial arts training. The martial arts are wide and varied, and characters can even devise their own styles. This part of *Oriental Adventures* really shines. It gives practitioners a wide range from which to choose and adds a very interesting dimension to combat. In keeping with their total dedication to martial arts, monks gain special bonuses which are unavailable to other characters.

Ki powers: In addition to being able to learn martial arts, each character class has its own unique ki powers, making for variety and giving each character class a distinctive feel. These powers are available at 1st level and become more effective as characters increase in levels. By using ki powers, *kensai* may automatically cause maximum damage on a successful hit, samurai may fight at 18/00 strength, and *wu jen* may employ a +3 bonus to initiative rolls once a day and may cast one lower-level spell at maximum strength. Ninja can hold their breath for a long time, walk across water and, at higher level, walk through walls.

Noncombat proficiencies: Every character is expected to possess proficiencies in the noncombat arts. Gained in the same manner as weapon proficiencies, these noncombat proficiencies make characters more three-dimensional by giving them skills such as calligraphy, etiquette, animal handling, *iaijutsu* (fast draw), and bowyer. As samurai were much more than just fighting machines, proficiencies make

it possible for characters to become involved in a wide range of activities. Adventures can therefore revolve around courtly pursuits like flower arranging or poetry. The proficiencies are each rated by a roll for success, so it is possible to take part in contests in which success gains a character both honor and experience points.

Family background: The system for determining family backgrounds generates a character's immediate family and ancestors. As well as determining family honor and status, it also provides characters with their birthrights. The more powerful the family, the more impressive the birthright. The inclusion of a family chart makes this system both graphically appealing and easy to use.

Honor: A character's honor is determined during character generation, and it may rise and fall in the course of the game. Extensive guidelines are provided to allow the DM to give out and take away honor points. Characters whose honor falls to zero simply have their character sheets thrown away, instead of performing seppuku. This is clean and certainly final.

Characters who attain a high honor score enjoy benefits in this world and in the next. In this world, they are renowned and in demand by powerful lords. In the next world, they gain a number of points which can be used to add to the ability scores and hit points of the players' next characters.

Background: Unlike the BUSHIDO game and *Land of Ninja*, *Oriental Adventures* is set in its own fantasy world, Kara-Tur. While primarily drawing on Japan for inspiration, it also contains elements of medieval China and Korea. Sections on religion, money, daily life, clothing, food, and buildings help bring this world alive and allow DMs to base their campaigns in any desired location.

The background is made even more vibrant by the addition of tables to generate yearly and monthly events in the campaign world. With this system, a GM can easily outline a game year and design specific adventures to flesh it out. The system is loose, yet detailed enough to allow characters to adventure against a backdrop of grand events.

Evaluation: Unlike the traditional AD&D® game, with its more abstract Western setting, the background of *Oriental Adventures* is fully integrated into the rules, making it a very complete and playable system. There is no need to learn a whole new set of rules to enjoy play in the Orient, and its wide range of character classes allows all manner of adventures to be played. *Oriental Adventures* is solidly Oriental in feel and is an excellent addition to the AD&D game.

Short and sweet

To stay with this month's Oriental flavor, let's take a quick look at two campaign

packs for *Oriental Adventures*, both of which have lots to offer players of the BUSHIDO game and *Land of Ninja* as well.

OA1 *Swords of the Daimyo*, by David "Zeb" Cook. TSR, Inc., \$12.00. This campaign and adventure pack for *Oriental Adventures* provides an overview of the politics and climate of the lands of Kozakura, a fantasy version of feudal Japan. Closely resembling the war-torn period of Japanese history between the Kamakura and Sengoku periods, when rival daimyos engaged in bloody struggles for power, Kozakura is a land of opportunity. By employing clever maneuvering and military muscle, anyone can rise to the heights of power.

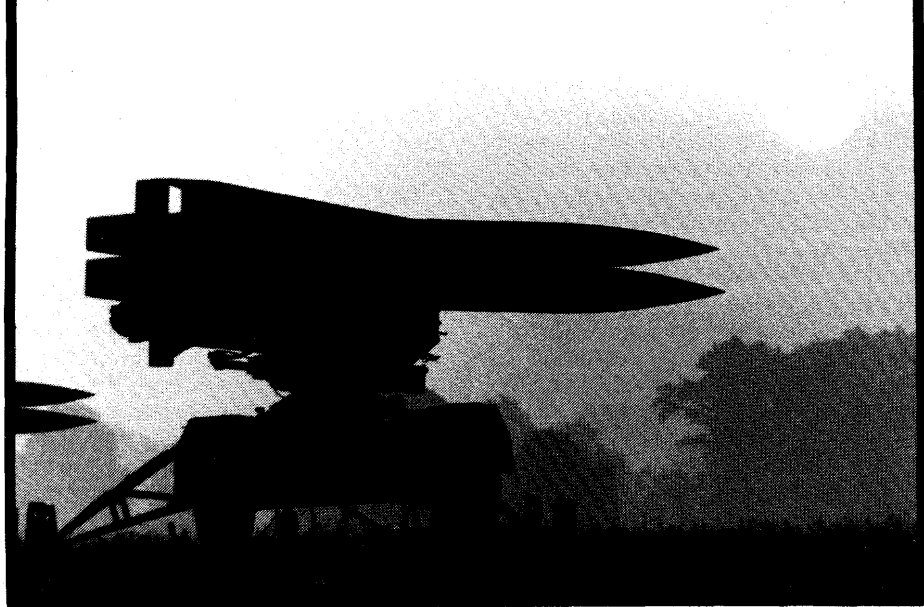
After giving a brief overview of Kozakura, the pack focuses on the province of Miyama — its government, samurai families, temples and landholdings. A gazetteer describes important sites and is crammed full of adventure ideas. Three detailed adventures are also included. The first deals with Western characters traveling to the East; the other two are for Oriental characters and form a linked package (although separated by time and a few character levels). Using the gazetteer, the DM is expected to design a few adventures to fill out the time between the two detailed ones. This is no great problem, but it would have been nice to have them more closely linked.

A list of names and maps of various residences commonly found in the province rounds out the package and makes it an invaluable asset to anyone running an Oriental campaign.

Blood of the Yakuza, by David "Zeb" Cook. TSR, Inc., \$7.95. The island of Wa is featured in this second campaign pack for *Oriental Adventures*. Wa draws its inspiration from the Tokugawa Shogunate of Japan and presents a more centralized and less war-torn period. Intrigues abound, however, as the powerful families of the land turn to more subtle ways of increasing their influence.

Where *Swords of the Daimyo* presents a predominantly rural background, *Blood of the Yakuza* details the city of Nakamaru and its politics. Information on the rival yakuza gangs and the political machinations of the important families and temples make this an ideal setting for all types of adventurers.

Rather than presenting the adventures as straightforward encounter plots, a number of narratives have been provided. Depending on their character class and background, adventurers can interact with these in many different ways. The DM must make the narratives work effectively, but the background on the major NPCs of the city, plus lists of names, occupations, and personalities for detailing minor NPCs, lighten the load considerably. *Blood of the Yakuza* is another excellent addition to the Oriental line.



by Daniel Salas

Catching Some Rays

Radiation damage and the GAMMA WORLD® game



Illustration by Timothy Truman

Given the real world's recent encounters with widespread contamination from nuclear accidents, second-edition GAMMA WORLD® game players should take a closer look at radiation and the hazards it can present. The information here is designed to make player characters more cautious when dealing with this hazard, though it is not necessarily realistic (you don't really mutate just from being exposed to radiation, though your offspring might).

In nuclear science, there are three types of radiation: alpha, beta, and gamma. Alpha particles are weak and relatively harmless. Beta particles can cause damage, but their long-term effects are beyond the scope of the fast-paced GAMMA WORLD game. However, the effects of high-energy gamma rays are quite immediate. Player characters are already aware of the damage they can sustain from exposure to dangerous radiation, but the full effects of such exposure need to be more specific than simple hit-point loss, mutation production, and instant death.

Expanded radiation rules

Radiation damage is cumulative, and should be recorded in addition to hit-point

loss. For example, if a character with 85 hp takes 20 hp damage from radiation, then he now has 65 hp and 20 radiation damage points (RDP). This amount is increased each time the character takes more radiation-caused damage. The RDP score heals by one point each day.

On the Radiation Matrix (Adventure Booklet, page 27), the letter "M" indicates new mutations for Humanoids and Mutated Animals, and 8d6 hp damage for Pure Strain Humans. Why would a Humanoid gain a beneficial mutation while his companion, a Pure Strain Human, lose hit points? Instead, *all* creatures should take 8d6 damage from such a powerful blast of gamma rays. Any new mutation gained is determined by Table 1 of this article; the chances of gaining a beneficial mutation are poor.

When "D" is indicated on the Radiation Matrix, the character exposed takes 9d6 damage. If the character's RDP score is less than 60, then increase it immediately to 60.

Table 2 of this article outlines the effects of radiation at different RDP levels. These effects occur each time the RDP score reaches the indicated level; thus, a character can suffer repeated effects if repeatedly exposed to gamma rays.

The following illnesses occur from radioactive poisoning:

Anemia: This illness is caused by a lack of red blood cells, which carry oxygen throughout the body. The victim is left in a weakened state which reduces Mental Strength, Dexterity, and Physical Strength by half. At the end of the illness, the victim recovers at a rate of two points per attribute per day, until the original scores are restored.

Five-Week Sickness: This illness develops over a period of several weeks. The first signs are nausea and vomiting, which strike 2-5 hours after exposure. Anemia lasts for 2-3 days, and the victim feels tired and run-down, but appears to recover. Then, 21-30 (1d10 + 20) days after exposure, the second phase of this illness begins. The victim suffers from anemia (again), arterial weakness, and bacterial susceptibility for the next 13-16 (1d4 + 12) days. The latter two effects are treated as per the mutations on pages 8-9 of the second-edition Basic Rules Booklet, and even Pure Strain Humans are subject to their effects (though these conditions are not acquired by victims as permanent mutations). On the last day of the illness, the percentage chance of the victim's survival equals the victim's current Constitution score times eight. Failure means immediate death. Success means immediate recovery from arterial weakness and bacterial susceptibility, as well as recovery from anemia as described above.

Gastrointestinal Syndrome: This fatal illness begins like Five-Week Sickness. Nausea and vomiting strike within 2-5 hours. Anemia, arterial weakness, and

Table 1
Mutations from Radiation

1d20 Mutation

- 1-4 Arterial Weakness
- 5-8 Bacterial Susceptibility
- 9-14 Skin Structure Change
- 15-18 Weight Decrease
- 19-20 Any random mutation

bacterial susceptibility strike within 2-5 days; at the same time, the victim begins to lose one Constitution point per day (also deduct the appropriate hit-point loss from the reduced attribute). When the Constitution score reaches zero, the victim dies from bleeding ulcers and bacterial infection in his digestive system.

Central Nervous System Syndrome (CNSS): This is the most severe form of radiation sickness. Vomiting begins 2-5 minutes after exposure. Damage to the central nervous system affects Mental Strength, Intelligence, and Dexterity; each of these attributes are reduced at the rate indicated on Table 2. Death occurs when any attribute reaches zero.

Mutations and weapons

Due to the new dangers now presented to player characters, the effects of certain mutations and weapons should be reevaluated. Any characters who use radiation as a natural weapon (specifically, Radiation Eyes and Gamma Hands) must have penalties to diffuse the increased power of these mutations. Though these characters are immune to the effects of gamma rays, their bodies constantly give off radiation at Intensity 3, affecting all creatures that come within one meter of them. Also, these characters have Weight Decrease as an additional mutation. This mutation is not counted as one of those rolled up in character creation.

A fusion rifle is given disadvantages for similar reasons. First, the Atomic Energy Cell that powers the weapon gives off continuous low-energy gamma rays, causing 1 hp damage per March Turn to characters not properly protected from the item. Second, the weapon's user must endure an Intensity 3 blast for each shot he fires!

A dirty fission bomb creates a permanently radioactive crater where it explodes. This crater is 520 meters wide and 50 meters deep, and it glows at Intensity 15. For every 20 meters beyond the edge of the crater, the Intensity drops by one level. Thus the entire blast radius of the bomb is filled with radioactive* fallout that lasts for 5,000 years.

Protection and treatment

Aside from a Force Field, the best physical protection against gamma rays is lead. For each meter of solid lead between a character and a radioactive source, the Intensity of exposure drops by 3 levels.

Table 2
Health Effects of Radiation

RDP Score	Effects
20	Anemia for 24 hours
25	Anemia for 48 hours
30	Anemia for 72 hours
40	"M" and Five-Week Sickness
50	Gastrointestinal Syndrome
60	CNSS; rate: 1 point per hour
70	CNSS; rate: 2 points per hour
80	CNSS; rate: 3 points per hour
90	CNSS; rate: 4 points per hour
100	CNSS; rate: 5 points per hour

The same amount of protection can be gained from two meters of concrete or three meters of wood or soil.

The best treatments for radiation poisoning are the medicinal drugs created before the Social Wars. Though an accelera dose will not heal damage from gamma rays, antiradiation serum will certainly help if applied in time. Two new drugs should also be mentioned.

Antibiotic serum: This is a 10-cm-long, disposable, jet-spray tube of a substance that destroys harmful bacteria and viruses. Once taken, the drug cures colds and pneumonia, and eliminates all infections. It does not prevent later attacks from bacteria and viruses. Cost: 50 gp.

Blood-stimulant serum: This is a 10-cm-long, disposable, jet-spray tube of a chemical that stimulates the production of red blood cells, white blood cells (which attack bacteria and viruses), and platelets (which block open wounds and stop bleeding). This chemical prevents the effects of anemia and arterial weakness for 24 hours. It also acts as an antibiotic serum. Cost: 150 gp.

Keeping the balance

One last point remains: how to restore the balance of the game. Are the player characters doomed to die miserably for the sake of detailed radiation rules?

One solution is for radioactive hazards to be well known to residents of affected areas. PCs will know of these restricted zones in their own home territories, and can learn about them from the inhabitants of unfamiliar territories. This "need to know" could stimulate some good PC-NPC interaction, as the characters scavenge for maps and information so that they don't wander into their own radioactive tombs.

Another solution is for referees to create fewer encounters with radiation. Deathlands, gamma-beam weapons, and radiation-spitting monsters should become rare ingredients in the GAMMA WORLD game campaign.

Under these conditions, the PCs' encounters with radiation will be challenging, nerve-racking, and maybe a little more frightening — as they are in real life. As they say, gamma rays are forever. Ω

NEW

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The Role of Computers

Lost in the Dream Zone

There are times when we take recreational software too seriously. If you don't get to play a five-star-rated game, it will probably not adversely affect your life. Reviews and comments must be taken as personal observations from people who have had experience with the reviewed products and are offering subjective views of the programs. Like all gamers, we enjoy our recreational time as well. We want to enjoy the games to which we commit time to review, so the product examined should offer more than just a little recreational value to the user.

The reader must make the final decision as to whether a particular game is of personal value. To that end, retailers and dealers should make it a policy to offer some method for the consumer to try out a software program before buying it. This not only results in a sale of a product that the customer really wanted, but also ends the flow of returns and subsequent paperwork for the retailer.

The final proof of any program's viability should be measured by positive reviews, dealer support and knowledge of the product, company support of their product, and consumer word-of-mouth. Our comments in this column are simply one of many measuring sticks you should consider before spending your hard-earned money on any product.

Baudville

5380 52nd Street SE
Grand Rapids MI 49508
(616) 698-0888

Dream Zone

Apple IIGS version

The Apple IIGS computer is coming into its own as a widely purchased and highly innovative system. However, most recrea-

tional software offerings for the IIGS have simply been rewrites of Apple II programs. Program rehashes do not access the graphics or sound capabilities of the IIGS and leave users feeling cheated.

Thanks to two 17-year-old programmers, Jason Rubin and Andy Gavin, the Apple IIGS is now in receipt of a superbly produced graphic-adventure game. Entitled *Dream Zone*, this game offers fantastic stereo sound effects, a superb musical score, enhanced graphic screens, and wonderful animation. The programmers also utilized one of Baudville's own programs to create the game. Baudville is the company responsible for such well-known and widely used Apple-specific graphics programs as *816/Paint* (for both the Apple II and IIGS family), *Blazing Paddles* (a paint program), *Take 1* (an animation program), and *Prince* (a color-printing program).

Your life in *Dream Zone* is somewhat colorless and unappealing until you sleep. Suddenly, the screen bursts into a dazzling array of graphics and colors, initiating an extremely strange and thought-provoking adventure. The game is easy to play. You can use the mouse as well as the keyboard to input commands and manage your character's movements while seeking clues and deciphering mysteries.

Dream Zone captures the player in his own dream, thanks to a rotten elixir that a scientist has brewed up. The only problem with this dream is that if you cannot escape the weird world of your own imagination, you may never reach reality again. The dream is full of nightmarish creatures and contains magic, airships, a floating castle, and the most troublesome bureaucracy you'll ever encounter. You can save and recall as many as 10 in-progress games.

Let's take a look at a typical *Dream Zone* screen, as shown above. The menu

bar at the top of the window allows you to manage the game in any way you wish. The Load and Save commands simply retrieve or write your games in progress. The Edit menu allows you to cut, paste, and copy text you have typed into the command line, which is at the bottom of the screen and accepts action commands, such as "Go north" or "Enter window."

The Options selection allows such niceties as coloring the text shown in the display line and description window. You can also turn the Visible Objects option on or off. When activated, objects that appear in the picture area of the screen can be captured and moved with the mouse. The objects appear as icons, and you position the mouse's cursor on top of the icon and click once; the object's name then appears in the command line. You can then click on the Get command in the display line, click on the object again, and the command line will say "Get [name of object]." You press the return key, and the object is removed



Load Save Edit Options



A typical view of the world in the *Dream Zone* reveals the striking graphics work that went into the production of this adventure. The screen is described on pages 80-82.

from the screen and placed in your inventory. To make the game more of a challenge, this option can be turned off.

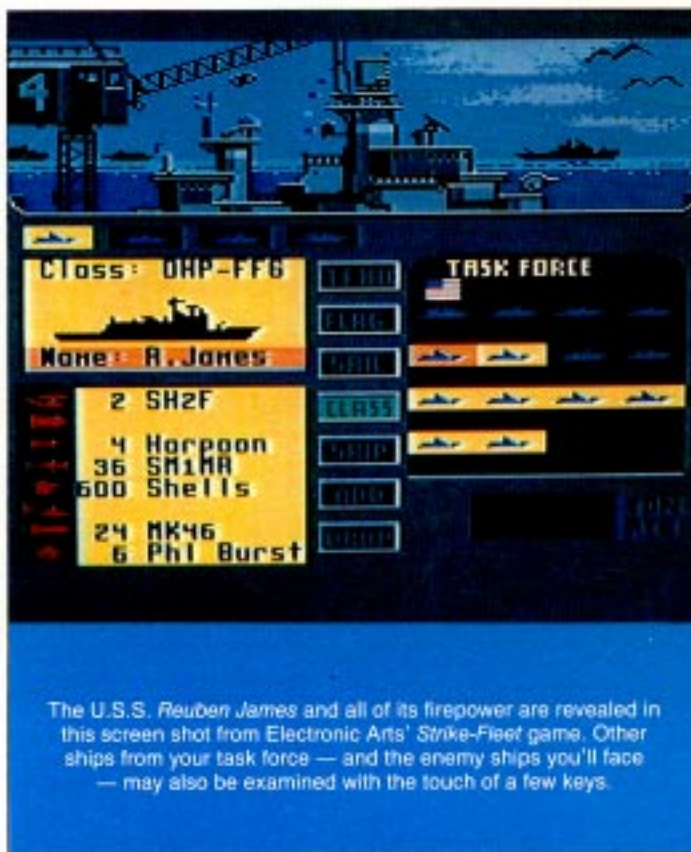
Another option in this menu is the Special Inventory which, when activated, moves your inventory display from the icon bar to the description window, so that the objects in your inventory can be easily used; each item in the inventory is then shown as an icon. You can turn the music on with the next command, select a new game, or quit. You'll use the Special Options menu quite often during the

course of a game. As we have so often pointed out: You must save, save, save your games whenever you change screens! The time taken to save your game in progress will negate many destructive surprises.

The picture area shows a panoramic view of your character's current location. As many as 12 objects can exist in one location at a time, so your picture area can be fairly well stocked with icons. By clicking your mouse cursor on all visible objects, you can get a good idea of what is

in this location.

To the far right of the screen is the control pad. Each button lists either a specific compass direction or up and down. By moving the mouse cursor atop any of these pads and clicking, your character moves in that direction. Clicking directly in the center of the control pad is the same as commanding your character to enter an area. You can either use the control pad to move your character or else type the movement direction in the command line.



The line below the picture area is the display line. At the far left of this line are the names of those who are accompanying you on your quest to escape your dream. By double-clicking on a name, you can talk to that individual. The center section of the display line has a brief description of your location; when double-clicked, this provides you with a far more detailed description of your surroundings. To the far right of this line is the information indicating what direction you are currently facing. Double-clicking on the View command automatically enters the word "About" in the command line. When you press return, this provides you with information about your location.

Next on the screen agenda is the icon bar. You'll note several action words which, when clicked on, put that word in the command line. Double-clicking on a word produces an alternate command, which is entered in the command line. For example, by double-clicking on the command Buy, the command Steal is entered into the command line. Other double-clicks provide Look Around, Get All, Drop All, Say, Show, Wear, Kill, and Eat.

Your character can talk to other characters in the game, which provides a wealth of information from occasional chats. You can "Say hello" to someone, then "Ask about [something]" if you wish. If your question is understood, the reply will be given to you in the description window.

Color-coding in the text gives special meaning to the accented words. For example, if the text is light blue in color, then

you are engaged in a conversation. Red means that something serious is about to occur. It is important to not only read the words in the description window but look at the hue of the words as well.

So much for the game mechanics. The actual play requires hours of concentrated effort before you solve your dream. The first few scenes are in black and white, and this environment continues until you decide you are ready to fall asleep. Some essentials must be obtained before deciding to enter your dream, requiring a visit to the bathroom and to your brother. Fortunately, you don't start out empty-handed — you've got a few coins in your pocket which might enable you to coax your little brother into relinquishing something that could later be useful. And the game states, "Good dental hygiene is the secret to good relationships," although your brother won't be able to help you in this regard.

Once you are prepared for bed, it's off to dreamland you go. With luck, you'll be able to escape the dream; until you do, only the dream sequences are displayed in full color. Initially, you're going to be tempted to revisit those areas you only viewed in black and white. Don't dally, however, near the "throne." This device seems to have suffered quite a nasty change of mood since the dream began.

There's a suspended causeway with a locked gate that requires a good look to ascertain the correct key needed to enter its portal. Once beyond the gate, you'll wander around a town square for a while,

trying to figure out not only how to get into a bar but how to obtain the correct forms from the bureaucratic Department of Information. The latter can absolutely drive you crazy! Before losing all of your cool, remember that bribery works in some cases. And as the officers who populate the Bureau of Information are "porkers," perhaps there is something in your inventory that would get one of them to obtain a vital form. Continued hassles by the various officers in this department could also lead you to violence, which in some cases is exactly the answer required. Should you become too frustrated and enter expletives into the command line, you get the chance to read graffiti to understand your sudden dilemma.

After you decipher the Bureau of Information's information miasma, the bar is a good place to talk with all sorts of characters, including two gals who appear to have been rejects from a Doublemint commercial. Remember that carnivals waste your money and your time, and while indebtedness can be of assistance in some cases, it may have a grounding effect in others.

Should you manage to return something owned by a relative of yours, escape from the dream occurs. Congratulations: You've won! Now take several aspirins to relieve that booming headache received from intense participation in *Dream Zone*.

As one of the earliest IIGS-specific adventures, this offering is excellent and quite playable by both novice and experienced adventurers. There is something in

this game for everyone, and the addition of a few animated sequences highlights several areas of investigation. We doubt you'll ever get bored with *Dream Zone*, and we look forward to Andy and Jason's next adventure offering, which we're told is in the works.

If you cannot solve the puzzles, Baudville has prepared a poster-size map and hint guide for *Dream Zone*. These items can be ordered directly from the company for \$6.00, which includes shipping and handling. To purchase these hints, you must be a registered owner of the game!

Electronic Arts

1820 Gateway Drive
San Mateo, CA 94404
(415) 571-7171

Strike-Fleet, The Naval Task Force Simulator *****

Commodore 64/128 and Apple II versions
If you own a Commodore 64/128 or Apple II computer and enjoy strategic scenarios, then *Strike-Fleet* (developed by Noah Falstein, Ken Macklin, and Larry Holland of LucasFilm Games) is a software program you must consider for purchase. The scope of this naval warfare simulation is staggering, and the graphics are absolutely top notch. What is amazing when first opening the 60 + page users' guide is that so much information can be included in a tactical game. You get 10 scenarios that cover the range from command of one ship to command of a complete task force involving 16 ships, with American, English, and enemy forces included in the scenarios. With information on strike-fleet weaponry (ranging from a broad selection of missiles and torpedos to defensive weapons) and air forces, you have a game that offers hours of intense excitement.

Your success in the missions is revealed at the conclusion of a scenario. The game program considers your actions and how well you followed the scenario directions, then displays any rank advancements or certificates of merit earned for your management of the fleet. The game is menu-driven through the early selection stages and can be played equally well through use of the joystick or keyboard. The first menu is called "Mission Briefing" and allows you to select one of the 10 scenarios as your first test of leadership. We highly recommend that you start with the first scenario. The scenarios include: "Stark Realities" (protect yourself while stationed in the Persian Gulf — but only if fired upon first); "The Enemy Below" (destroy two Argentine submarines during the Falklands action); "The Road to Kuwait" (escort three oil tankers through the Persian Gulf and the Straits of Hormuz with your task force); "Falklands Defense" (eliminate an Argentine force of three frigates); "Dire Straits" (neutralize the opposition in the Persian Gulf); "Atlantic

Cork" (prevent the Soviet fleet from escaping the Norwegian Sea in World War III); "Surprise Invasion" (stop a Soviet naval invasion of Norway); "Escape to New York" (get back to the United States through a Soviet naval blockade); "Wolfpack 1990" (escort convoys to the U.S. base at Greenland); and "Mopping Up" (contain Soviet ships near the end of World War III).

After choosing a scenario, it's on to the shipyard screen, where you obtain information on each ship included in the scenario. An in-depth reference section in the user's manual explains every weapon system on each allied and enemy ship. At your disposal are helicopters, long- and short-range antiship missiles, anti-aircraft missiles, dual-purpose cannon rounds, ASROC antisubmarine missiles, torpedoes, and Phalanx automatic antimissile defensive cannon bursts. Not all scenarios allow ships to have all of these weapon systems, but the systems carried are appropriate for the designated scenario.

You may designate the flagship and add to or drop ships from your task force, but the time finally comes to sail. When you click on the Sail option, a map of the area covered by the scenario is displayed on screen. Through selection of appropriate on-screen commands, you can zoom in on the area of patrol and set your task force's destination, speed, alert status (general quarters is the most appropriate), radar and sonar status, or reassign another vessel as the flagship.

Once the orders are given, the bridge becomes the screen most often utilized throughout the game. By varying the range of the radar and sonar, you can determine when opposing forces are approaching. This does not apply to submarine warfare, where even the slightest movement of your craft will disrupt sonar readings; thus, you must drift with your sonar pinging for the enemy. Some of the scenarios are quite lengthy, so the game programmers have thoughtfully included a time-compression feature that enables the

player to rush through the noncritical portions of the scenario until something occurs — like enemy patrol craft being detected by radar.

With helicopter capabilities and a variety of weapons aboard, players might think that they have the upper hand. Nothing could be further from the truth. After nearly 10 hours of play, we've moved up to the third scenario with the rank of Lieutenant Commander. The second scenario, which involves two Argentine submarines, requires a different play mode. You have to think like a submariner: full speed to a location, then drift, sonar pinging at the depths. We required five full games before we finally managed to get the hang of submarine warfare. Even then, during the fifth scenario, we still lost one of our vessels to the enemy.

We cannot speak highly enough of this offering. LucasFilm is to be heartily congratulated for developing a tactical game that is completely engrossing, thoroughly exciting, graphically pleasing, and capable of portraying what it must be like to command a Strike Fleet. You can also save one game in progress on a blank data disk; believe us, you'll need it!

Activision, Inc.

2350 Bayshore Parkway
Mountain View CA 94043
(415) 960-0410

The Pawn ****

IBM micros and compatibles version with an EGA board (**½ without an EGA board)

The Pawn is steadily pushing toward the status of becoming a classic adventure game. Originally released for the Apple II computer family, Firebird has now ported the game into versions for every desktop computer available. Something is rotten in Kerovnia, and the player's main task is to escape that land. While wandering around, however, other characters are

Computer-Game Conversions Table

Activision, Inc. (415) 960-0410
Elite to IBM and compatibles format
Faery Tale Adventure to IBMs and C64/128
Fire Power to C64/128, Apple IIGS, IBMs and Macintosh
The Last Ninja to IBMs and compatibles, Apple IIGS, and Apple II computers
Might and Magic: Secret of the Inner Sanctum to Macintosh
Tracker to Atari ST format

Cosmi (213) 835-9687
Defcon 5 to IBMs and compatibles

Data East (408) 286-7074
Ikari Warriors for IBMs and the Apple II computer family

MicroProse (301) 771-1151
Gunship to Atari ST format with enhanced capabilities over other formats
Pirates! released in IBM and Apple II compatibles format

Mindscape (312) 480-7667
Deja Vu: A Nightmare Comes True for Macintosh and Amiga computers

met who can be of great assistance (or danger) to you.

The IBM microcomputer can be used for far more than business operations. With the price of IBM clones tumbling to below \$500, more and more personal computers are finding their way into homes and into the hands of software gamers. IBM computers require graphics adapters to display graphics on screen. There are now several types of displays: monochrome (black-and-white graphics, usually referred to as MDA); Hercules Graphics Adapter (also monochrome, but with a much higher resolution than MDA, developed by Hercules Technology and referred to as HGC); Color Graphics Adapter (the standard color-graphics mode as developed by IBM and known as CGA); Enhanced Graphics Adapter (the new graphics standard that displays a wide range of colors at higher resolution than CGA); and the future graphics standard, also known as VGA. The latter is a result of the new technology found with the recently released IBM Personal system/2 computer family (known as PS/2).

To fully appreciate the detail and work of the graphics incorporated into *The Pawn*, you must have an IBM with at least EGA capability. Otherwise, the game is simply run as a text-only version, and we feel it loses some of its appeal without the fine graphic portrayal of game scenes. If *The Pawn* is to be at its best, we also recommend running the game on at least an 80286- or 80386-based computer. The speed of these latter machines allows the display of graphics to take place without too much of a wait. We're fortunate in that we now have a Tandy 4000 80386-based IBM compatible, and we are absolutely delighted with its performance on graphic-intensive software.

The Pawn is not only great for experienced adventurers, but because of the interactivity of the scenario's characters, it also enables novice gamers to learn as they progress through the land of Kerovnia. This is certainly one offering that any computer-game library should contain.

News and new products

Accolade

20813 Stevens Creek Boulevard
Cupertino CA 95014
(408) 446-5757

A new and unusual strategy-action game has made its debut from Accolade. Entitled *The Train: Escape to Normandy*, the player becomes French Resistance leader Pierre Le Feu, who is in charge of seizing an armored war train and guiding it through enemy lines to safety at Riviere, Normandy. The player must not only engineer the train, which contains France's art treasures, but avoid enemy traps, ambushes, and sabotage attempts. The game has been released for the C64/128 and is priced at \$29.95.

Activision, Inc.

Activision has absolutely gone berserk with new game releases, not only for microcomputers but for the Nintendo and Atari 2600 game machines as well. A quick rundown of the Atari 2600 entries include: *Commando*, a fight against overwhelming odds to defeat advancing rebel forces; *Kung Fu Master*, a quest through five levels to rescue the fair maiden from the wizards temple; *Title Match Pro Wrestling*, a choice of four different wrestlers to take on the computer or a friend with different wrestling moves; and *Skateboardin'*, a skateboard ride through a maze of city streets to get to school on time. For the Nintendo Entertainment System, *Super Pitfall* will be released with 270 screens of danger as Pitfall Harry searches a vast cave in the Andes.

In the microcomputer arena, *Rampage* has been introduced for the C64/128, IBM and compatibles, and Apple II computers. In *Rampage*, the player controls one of three nasty creatures in this monster-movie action game for one or two players. Destroy your favorite city and eat tanks

and innocent bystanders — it's all in fun.

Activision has also beefed up their Solid Gold line of lower-cost entertainments. Some extremely popular games are now in this line with prices ranging from \$14.95 to \$19.95. The new entries include: *Hacker II: The Doomsday Papers* (IBMs, Apple II, C64/128, Macintosh, Apple IIGS); *The Transformers: The Battle To Save Earth* (C64/128); *Zork I* (IBM, Apple II, C64/128 and Macintosh); *Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy* (IBM, Apple II, C64/128 and Macintosh); *Championship Golf* (IBMs); and *Star Rank Boxing and On-Court Tennis* (combo-pak for C64/128).

From MicroIllusions, one of Activision's affiliated labels, come a host of new games. These include: *Land of Legends*, a fully animated fantasy role-playing game with a unique overhead view that lets players watch their adventurers take on adversaries blow-by-blow; *Ebonstar*, a seek-and-destroy space adventure that can be played by as many as four players (the game's objective is to destroy black holes); *Galactic Invasion*, an intergalactic dogfight that pits galaxy against galaxy; and *Planetarium*, a powerful, accurate, and graphically spectacular home planetarium that features over 9,000 stars. Initial game versions will be for the Commodore Amiga, with C64/128, Apple IIGS and IBM to follow later this year.

Activision has also signed an agreement whereby the company will now be distributing such adventure games as *The Pawn*, *The Guild of Thieves*, *Elite*, and *Starglider*.

The Avalon Hill Game Company

4517 Harford Road
Baltimore MD 21214
(301) 254-9200

Wooden Ships & Iron Men recreates the battles and campaigns of the great Age of Sail. Ships can crash into each other, run afoul, grapple, or end up in position for deadly raking fire. There are 18 nationalities and 13 ship types available for the player's own designs. Included are 30 historical actions ranging from two-ship duels to 20-ship fleet actions. The game is in the C64/128 format.

Broderbund Software

17 Paul Drive
San Rafael CA 94903-2101
(415) 492-3200

This company's winning Carmen Sandiego series continues with the release of *Where in Europe is Carmen Sandiego?*, which covers 34 European countries as players chase the elusive Carmen and her gang of thieves. There is a new, on-screen "Crimestopper's Notebook" for recording clues as well as the "Factfinder's Database." Rand McNally's *Concise Atlas of Europe* is included. This exciting game has been

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by Bob Blake

Baldemar is a complete medieval town setting, compatible with any fantasy role-playing game. It describes over 450 buildings and 125 noteworthy residents, which you can customize for your own campaign with less than an hour's work. Full personality sketches of Baldemar's most important citizens are included for maximum role-playing enjoyment, but you determine their actual powers and abilities. Baldemar includes a large full-color poster map with a political record chart on the back.

ÆSHEBA: Greek Africa

by Bob Blake, Frank Mentzer & Jeff O'Hare

Start with Africa, around 300 B.C., and shrink it a bit. Remove the Nile, so the Egyptians remain a primitive culture, and redesign the terrain features while leaving the ecology and the climate about the same. Now add Greek colonists along the north coast, and let the whole thing brew for three centuries. *ÆSHEBA: Greek Africa* includes a large full-color poster map of the Æsheban continent, details on the government and society of four Greek city-states, and cultural notes on real African tribal societies.

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The Abduction of Good King Despot

by W. Niebling, S. Niebling & R. Stambaugh

Good King Despot has been abducted! The Kingdom has lost this benign, honest, charitable ruler (at least, that's what he said he was, and the dubious tax-crippled citizens found it prudent to agree). The King is held in a magical prison of the arch-fiend Ignax. A party of brave adventurers will get the unenviable task of digging him out — perhaps even literally. The warped mind of Ignax has created the zaniest dungeon setting they have ever experienced, with weird and dangerous monsters, strange traps, improbable encounters, cryptic clues and utterly mystifying situations.

Those Darn Dwarves

by Hal McKinney

It's those darn dwarves. You know, the odd ones from the Iron Mountains. The ones who inspired such phrases as "a dwarf's dozen" (ten), a "dwarvish sense of humor" (like inviting you to dinner and sticking you with the bill), and so forth. Well, those darn dwarves are back in town at their favorite tavern, the Dancing Pig. They've got magical weapons and horses for sale. And they need adventurers — like you — to rescue trapped miners, battle a giant boar, and partake of other light amusements. But you've got to remember three things: always watch your wallet; always look a gift horse in the mouth; and never, never, *ever* say Yes.



NEW INFINITIES PRODUCTIONS, INC.
P.O. BOX 657
DELAN, WI 53115

released for the Apple II and IBM and compatible computer systems. C64/128 users certainly haven't been forgotten — Broderbund has released a C64/128 version of the *Arcade Game Construction Kit*. This kit provides gamers with professional and easy-to-use tools for designing their own games. There are six "starter kits" plus tools for creating games with as many as 50 levels.

Electronic Arts

One of the largest, brand-new, computerized FRPGs has been unveiled by Electronic Arts: *Deathlord*, which contains 157 dungeon levels, 128 different kinds of monsters, 16 separate continents to explore, and 84 magic spells, as well as problems with the weather, time of day, and climate. Characters from *The Bard's Tale II* and *Wizardry I, II, and III* and *Ultima III* can be transferred into this game. For the Apple II computer, the game will also be available for the C64/128 later this year.

Mindscape, Inc.

3444 Dundee Road
Northbrook IL 60062
(312) 480-7667

Mindscape has introduced a thrilling new adventure for Macintosh owners: *Citadel*. Players are involved in a quest on an unknown world to vanquish serpents, dragons, and other deadly foes. With 3-D graphics and digitized sound, players traverse a subterranean stone maze in search of the secret it holds. You can also create in-depth characters for the campaign. A do-it-yourself scenario is also included. Also from Mindscape are some yet-to-be-released Cineware programs: *Rocket Ranger*, *The Three Stooges*, and *Warp Speed*.

Spectrum HoloByte

A division of SPHERE
2061 Challenger Drive
Alameda CA 94501
(415) 522-3584

A new graphics quest series has made its debut from Spectrum HoloByte, with the first module entitled *Dondra — A New Beginning*, now shipping for the Apple II computer family. The player embarks on a journey in the futuristic world of Dondra to find the Crystal Prism of Heheutotol. There are over 100 original pictures and more than 30 animated sequences. Versions for the Apple IIGS and C64/128 will also be released shortly.

Strategic Simulations, Inc.

1046 North Rengstorff Avenue
Mountain View CA 94043-1716
(415) 964-1353

We've been waiting for this sequel to be announced for some time! *Questron II* is the sequel that begins where *Questron* left off, with your character in possession of the Evil Book of Magic that was stolen from the crazed magician, Mantor. In this follow-up fantasy adventure, your character must journey back in time to Landor to make certain that this book is never created. There are over 60 different creatures and a wide variety of magical spells. The game will be available for the C64/128, Apple II, IBMs and compatibles, Atari ST, and Commodore Amiga computers.

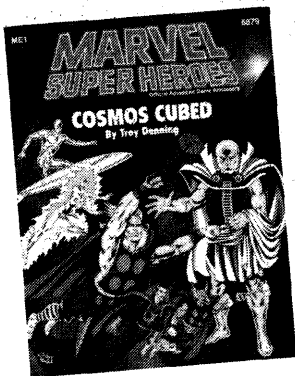
The Beasties

On a final note, we want your nominations for The Beasties, the best recreational-software offerings of 1988. Just write your name, address, and computer system on a 15-cent postcard and give the name of your favorite recreational software package. If you have more than one favorite, list them in order of preference, and please indicate the computer version for each game receiving your vote. Until next time, game on! Ω

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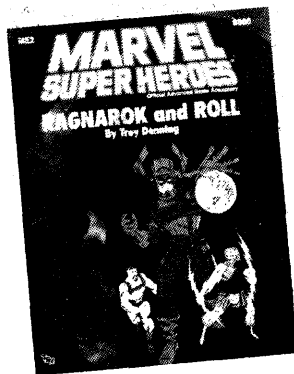
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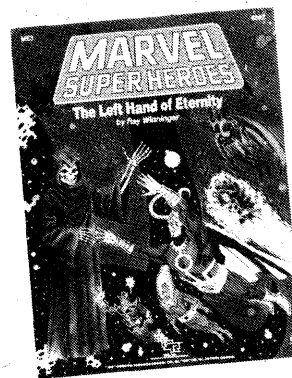


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The Ultimate Addenda's Addenda

Yet more superpowers for the MARVEL SUPER HEROES® game

As promised in the last "Ultimate Addenda" (from DRAGON® issue #122), here are more superpowers that were created by you, the role-playing public, for the MARVEL SUPER HEROES® Advanced Set game. These powers are designed to fit with the format of MA3 *The Ultimate Powers Book* (herein known as the *TUPB*). Each new power is credited to the people who suggested it. This column also deals with a new class of "rule powers," which are powers that alter the game mechanics. Players and Judges should rewrite the Power Generation tables on pages 14-16 of the *TUPB* in order to accommodate these additions, if they are used.

New Physical Form

S32/Collective Mass: Tom Lamphier looked at the Marvel Super Villain Swarm and came up with this variation of the S16/Physical Gestalt body type. The body of the character is a collection of individual bodies held tightly together and functioning as a single unit. Unlike Physical Gestalt, the individuals retain their distinct physical forms (though admittedly it may be hard to actually spot any given individual if they are tiny). One helpful side effect of this power is that the individual bodies do not physically suffer while they are joined together; breathing is assumed to occur without difficulty. However, the Collective Mass will probably have to break apart in order to allow the individual units to eat.

Primary and secondary abilities are rolled on Column 1 of the Rank Table on page 11 of the *TUPB*. Because of its peculiar dual nature, a Collective Mass has two sets of primary abilities. The first set represents the average abilities possessed by the individual component entities; the second set is that of the Collective Mass. The majority of powers can only be mani-

fested by the Collective Mass. Individual entities can at best exhibit Feeble-rank versions of the available powers; otherwise, why bother to be a Collective Mass in the first place? The Collective Mass's abilities may be affected by the loss or addition of more individual entities to its form.

A Collective Mass gains +2CS Resistance to physical or directed energy attacks (lasers, for example). Its unique physical structure allows it to simply create holes in its body to avoid making contact with the attacking force. However, such beings have a peculiar weakness: A successful Grappling attack breaks the body into two masses! The body can automatically rejoin in 1-4 turns unless something prevents this, like teleporting half the body into a parallel dimension.

The Collective Mass can be any size, depending on the size and number of the individuals entities that compose it. Most Collective Masses in Marvel Universe campaigns are human-size and composed of smaller creatures generally less than 3" long (between the size of a mouse and a dragonfly). If the Judge allows, a Collective Mass may be a giant composed of human-size entities. In special cases, the Collective Mass may even be a titan composed of relatively large beings.

Ordinarily, the number of individuals composing the Collective Mass is less than the rank number of the Collective Mass's Reason, multiplied by 100. The individual entities can be of any nature, whether animal, plant, or machine; the individual components may be sentient or not. If the Collective Mass is composed of relatively ordinary creatures (as opposed to something strange, like a colony of snakes mutated by a nuclear test at Los Alamos), the Collective Mass has the option of

absorbing more of these component creatures into itself. A Red Psyche FEAT allows this to occur. In such a case, the addition may have the effect of increasing the Collective Mass's primary abilities.

In an Earth-based Marvel Universe campaign, the Collective Mass has the ability to transform itself into a human likeness by making a Psyche FEAT. However, the visual appearance of the individual bodies does not change; a disguise is needed if the Collective Mass is to impersonate a normal human.

New superpowers

Each of these superpowers has a 2% chance of appearing during the random power-selection process.

P18/Hyper-Intake/Expulsion: This power was in my original *TUPB* proposal, yet not only did I forget to put this in the *TUPB*, I also forgot to put in the original addenda article! This power is usually referred to as "Super Breath" and, while it is technically a Matter Control power, should be listed under the class of Physical Enhancement powers in the *TUPB*. The hero has the ability to ingest awesome amounts of matter, retain them indefinitely, then expel them with power rank force. When creating a hero with this power, the player must decide what the hero can handle. A random die roll determines his chance of having the power to handle gas, liquid, solids, or some combination of these.

Die roll Category

- 01-16 Gases only
- 17-32 Liquids only
- 33-48 Solids only
- 49-64 Gases and liquids
- 65-80 Liquids and solids
- 81-00 Gases, solids, and liquids

This power enables the hero to absorb quantities far exceeding the normal volume of the human body. He can absorb a volume of gas equal to the power rank number times 100 cubic feet. Liquids and solids are limited to the number of cubic feet equal to the power rank number. A side effect of this power is that the ingested matter is somehow compressed, diminished in size, or displaced into a pocket dimension; this enables the hero to retain his ordinary shape, although his weight does increase a token amount. It is up to the Judge's discretion as to how much weight is gained, with a 1% weight increase being a rule of thumb. Note that a sudden failure of this power can be disastrous! Such catastrophes range from (at best) the sudden expulsion of all ingested matter, retention of the ingested matter with the hero suddenly bearing all of its weight, or the rapid expansion of the ingested matter to its original size (this latter possibility being quite fatal).

Normally, a hero can retain the ingested matter indefinitely. A side effect of the power gives the hero internal invulnerability

Table for Random Rule Powers

Die Power

01-12 Attribute Change	R1
13-29 Attribute Pool	R2
30-41 Attribute Rearrangement	R3
42-47 Award Change	R4
48-59 Award Pool	R5
60-65 Award Rearrangement	R6
66-71 Initiative Change	R7
72-00 Power Combination	R8

ity equal to his power rank, preventing major internal damage due to ingested poisons or physically damaging materials. Solids and liquids can be retained for as long as the hero can go without food; digestion normally stops while this power is in effect. If the gases ingested are toxic, the hero can only retain them for the amount of time he can hold his breath. If the mixture is not toxic and contains a sufficient quantity of oxygen, then the hero can hold his breath indefinitely.

The hero can expel the matter harmlessly or direct it into a blast that has power rank range and damage. He can also do damage by ingesting. For example, by inhaling all the air in a room, he can cause certain events to occur. One, everyone in the room must make an Endurance FEAT or pass out from the sudden absence of air. Two, the room can implode if the pressure difference exceeds the walls' material strength.

P19/Hyper-Endurance: A number of readers pointed out that I referred to this in the *TUPB* as a power rather than as a primary ability. Sorry! Hyper-Endurance is designed to increase your hero's (hopefully) already formidable Endurance. The randomly determined rank is added to your PC's previously determined Endurance rank whenever he uses a power that drains his Endurance. In this way, heroes can exceed their physical limitations. Hyper-Endurance is an optional power for such things as Hyper-Running, Hyper-Swimming, and other powers requiring muscular effort.

P20/Hyper-Strength: I kept referring to this as a power, too, so here it is. Hyper-Strength is an addition to your hero's previously determined Strength rank. The player has two choices here: He can permanently combine the two ranks, or else make the addition a temporary one. In the latter case, the hero can "Hulk out" and manifest great strength during a limited time. The daily limit on this form of Hyper-Strength is a number of game turns equal to the power rank number. Also, the temporary form carries with it a bonus of +1CS rank.

MG14/Probability Control: I had intended this to be a variation of MG10/Reality Alteration (Alter Future). However, enough people have this power to justify its status as an independent power. Unlike the Alter Future power, this power func-

tions at a more limited range; the power takes effect the same turn it is used. The original Marvel heroine with this power, Scarlet Witch, could only create entropic effects. Other superhumans such as Roulette developed the ability to produce beneficial effects as well.

There are three ways the hero can use the power to affect his immediate future. The first way pits his power against the Psyche of the target. In this effect, the hero makes the target act in the way the hero intends. The second method pits this power's power rank against the material strength of the target. In this case, the hero can temporarily control the physical properties of the target. In the third case, the hero pits his power against the intensity rank of a target phenomenon (energy fields, magic, powers, etc.). In all three cases, the range is limited to the hero's immediate area.

T24/Spinner: George O'Ravis looked to the Whirlwind to come up with this peculiar Travel power. The hero can attain power rank ground speed by rapidly pivoting. The visual effect is that he blurs into a human top. The hero gains several useful side effects. This power's rank is added to the Fighting rank when a grappling attack is used against the Spinner. He gains power rank resistance to physical attacks. His Endurance rank increases by this power's rank number; this enables him to maintain his power for extended periods as well as avoid the obvious dizziness and nausea. The hero's visual acuity increases to give him the equivalent of Circular Vision; despite his rapid rotation, the hero perceives the world as a static, 360-degree field of vision. However, unless the player states otherwise, it is assumed that he is only looking directly outward. Thus, he can be surprised by attacks from below or above. If the hero has such powers as increased Strength (Incredible rank or better), Invulnerability, or Hyper-Digging, he can bore his way through any target with a Material Strength less than this power's rank. As a power stunt, the hero can develop his power to attain flight. This is treated as T23/Whirlwind flight of one rank lower than the Spinner's power rank.

F6/Unique Weapon: Edward and Adam Nevraumont brought up this variant from the Fighting Powers class. The hero possesses a specific tool or device that contains many of the powers assigned to the hero. When creating the hero, the player should assign only the Mental and Physical Powers to the hero himself; all other powers should be assigned to the Unique Weapon. Such assigned powers then can only be manifested by the weapon itself or by the hero's direct contact with the device. The player should work with the Judge to determine the shape and nature of the item, as well as who gets what power.

The nature and function of each Unique Weapon should reflect the powers availa-

ble, the player's imagination, the hero's background and physical type, and the campaign setting. The randomly rolled power rank becomes the material strength of the item.

A Unique Weapon is just that; lose it and you're out of luck. The hero can acquire his item in a number of ways. The most common are "I Found It," "I Received It," and "I Created It." The player should roll once on the Origin of Power Table (page 10, *TUPB*) to see what the background on his item is. If the device was attained by accident or as a gift, the hero might not be able to replace or repair it. Such conditions must be resolved by the Judge.

M34/Omni-Knowledge: A reader named "Comalite J" created this interesting variant on the learning process. A character with this power has an innate, subconscious link to a sort of cosmic reference library. When he is presented with a question concerning information of which he was previously ignorant, the PC must make a FEAT. Green FEATs give him access to contemporary human knowledge. Yellow FEATs give him access to alien knowledge. Red FEATs give him access to Entity-level knowledge. Success means he is able to give a short, concise answer that only answers the initial question. As a limit to this power, the question must be asked of the hero by another person. Also, despite his ability to "know" any given topic, the PC might not be able to understand it. His comprehension is still limited by his Reason. This power enables the Judge to create idiot savants who can decipher the workings of Galactus's Worldship but are unable to tie their shoelaces,

For example: Ref-Book and his buddy Jaunt find themselves in the Watcher's recreation room, facing a piece of alien technology. Ref-Book has no idea of what the thing is, but when Jaunt asks the magic question "What is that?" Ref-Book's power goes to work. He makes a Red FEAT, gains the necessary knowledge, and says "It's a television set." "Well, how do we turn it on?" asks Jaunt. Ref-Book fails his next FEAT and says, "Beats me."

Rule powers

Several powers in current RPGs exist only for the sake of altering the mechanics of that specific game. Such examples include Mystic Link (from Mayfaur's DC™ HEROES game) and Spending Karma (in the MARVEL SUPER HEROES game). I hadn't touched on these because most of these powers only function within the confines of their home games. They cannot be easily transformed into other settings, such as actions in a comic book. However, that doesn't justify my further ignoring their existence; hence, the creation of a new class of powers. The rule powers class is the rarest form of power. During the Character Creation process, this class of powers has only a base 3% chance of occurring. All rule powers have extremely short ranges; their initial effects

are limited to the hero and those beings and objects within the immediate vicinity (i.e., the same area). Rule powers include the following:

R1/Attribute Change: The hero has the ability to temporarily increase the rank of a specific ability or power by the rule power's rank. He can automatically retain the enhanced rank for 1-10 game turns, but he must make a Psyche FEAT each turn beyond that to retain the enhancement. For example, Cosmic Dasher possesses Incredible Attribute Change. He uses it to increase his normally Amazing Hyperspeed with an additional burst of energy, thus attaining Unearthly speed.

R2/Attribute Pool: The hero is able to directly combine his powers' or abilities' ranks with those of other heroes. The combined energy can then be channeled into a specific power or attribute shared by the affected characters and then used to perform a specific action. A Green FEAT is needed to perform this. In game terms, the players add their characters' ranks of the chosen ability; the sum is then temporarily reassigned as a new rank for each member of the group. For example, Cyber1, Cyber2, and Cyber3 pool their Excellent, Remarkable, and Amazing Strengths together; they each then achieve an effective rank of Unearthly Strength.

R3/Attribute Rearrangement: The

hero can reassign the basic value of his various abilities to enhance other abilities. In effect, the player has the ability to rewrite his hero's abilities and powers at will. The rule power's rank is used to make this FEAT. The effect initially lasts 1-10 game turns; beyond that, he must make a successful Psyche FEAT each turn to maintain the rearrangement.

R4/Award Change: The player can temporarily increase the size of the Karma game award previously given his or another's character. The player can increase his hero's Karma by this power's rank by means of a Green FEAT. The player can increase the size of an ally's Karma with a Yellow FEAT. A Red FEAT can either increase or decrease an opponent's Karma. Such changes occur in the same turn the power is used and last for 1-10 turns; after that, the hero must make a Psyche FEAT to maintain the effects.

R5/Award Pool: In the MARVEL SUPER HEROES game, this is called Karma Pooling. The player can temporarily pool his award value with that of other player characters, then use that increased reward to perform a group function. The pooling lasts for 10 turns plus a number of turns equal to the number of PCs participating in the pool.

R6/Award Rearrangement: The player can temporarily reassign the Karma values of other players' characters by

means of a Green FEAT. He can transfer a number of Karma Points equal to his power rank between either allies or opponents. Unscrupulous PCs can use this power to siphon Karma from civilian NPCs (onlookers, passers-by, etc.); this is considered a villainous act since it is akin to Vampirism.

R7/Initiative Change: The player can temporarily alter the order of play, deciding who plays in what order if he makes a successful Green FEAT. A Red FEAT can be used to either take away another character's turn or to instate a turn at a time when the affected player would otherwise be unable to roll.

R8/Power Combination: This power normally occurs only during the Character Creation process. Rolling this rule power requires the player to combine two of his hero's already existing powers into a new hybrid form. The new hybrid power permanently replaces the affected powers. Power Combination enables the player to create some really peculiar, unique characters. High-ranked NPCs may possess a special form of this power with which they can alter another character's powers at any time. However, the power's use is limited to once per day and only in non-combative situations. In this way, the Judge can create character-transforming incidents to enliven, confuse, or rearrange the existing campaign. Ω

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CONVENTION CALENDAR

Convention Calendar Policies

This column is offered as a service to our readers around the world. Anyone may place a free listing for a game convention here, but the following guidelines **must** be observed.

In order to ensure that all convention listings contain accurate and timely information, all material should be either typed double-spaced or printed legibly on 8½" x 11" paper. The contents of each listing should be short, succinct, and under 150 words long.

The information given in the listing **must** include the following information, in the following order:

1. Convention title and dates held;
2. Site and location;
3. Guests of honor (if applicable);
4. Special events offered;
5. Registration fees or attendance requirements; and,
6. Address(es) and telephone number(s) where additional information and confirmation can be obtained.

Convention flyers, brochures, newsletters, and other mass-mailed announcements will not be considered for use in this column; we prefer to see a cover letter with the announcement as well. **No** call-in listings are accepted. Domestic and foreign conventions are welcome. Unless stated otherwise, all dollar values given for U.S. and Canadian conventions are in U.S. currency.

WARNING: We are not responsible for incorrect information sent to us by convention staff members. Please check your convention listing carefully! Our wide circulation ensures that over a quarter of a million readers see each issue. Accurate information is your responsibility.

Convention listings should be mailed by the copy deadline date to: Convention Calendar, DRAGON® Magazine, P.O. Box 110, Lake Geneva WI 53147. Copy deadline dates are the last Monday of each month, two months prior to the on-sale date of an issue. For example, the copy deadline for the December 1988 issue is the last Monday of October 1988. Plan ahead; early listings pay off!

If a convention listing must be changed because the convention has been cancelled, the dates have changed, or incorrect information has been printed, **please contact us immediately!** For any questions or changes related to this column, please call either Robin Jenkins or Roger E. Moore at TSR, Inc., (414) 248-3625.

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* indicates a Canadian convention.
● indicates a European convention.

DALLASCON '88, June 3-5

The largest gaming convention in the Southwest will be held at the Regent Hotel, Mockingbird and I-35 in Dallas, Tex. This convention covers role-playing, board games, and miniatures. Also included is an AD&D® game open event, along with BATTLETECH®, CAR WARS®, and STAR FLEET BATTLES® game tournaments. Registration opens at 5 P.M. on Friday. Write to: DALLASCON, P.O. Box 867623, Plano TX 75086; or call: (214)247-7981.

INTERDIMENSIONS '88, June 3-5

This convention has been cancelled.

FRON II, June 4

This second-annual role-playing gaming convention will be held at the Gaertnerweg in Frankfurt, Germany (near Alte Oper, St. Ignatius community). The convention will run from 10 A.M. to 10 P.M. on Saturday. Admission is 2,50 Deutsche Marks (see exchange rate for U.S. equivalent). Game masters and club members are admitted free of charge. For enrollment as a GM, write to: Role-playing and Simulation Game Club "252" r.a., c/o Martin Kliehm, In der Roemerstadt 164, D-6000 Frankfurt am Main 50, WEST GERMANY; or call: 01149/69-574 579.

HOBBY CON '88, June 4

Sponsored by Amazing World of Fantasy and Bojo's Records and Tapes, this one-day gaming and collector's convention will be held at the Rome Civic Center on Turner-McCall Blvd. in Rome, Ga, from 10 A.M. to 6 P.M. on Saturday. Guests will include: Mark Bagley, artist of Marvel Comics Spider-Man Annuals; Wayne Van Sant, artist of Marvel Comics *The 'Nam*; Joe Phillips, artist of *Ex-Mutants*; and Susan Barrows, Ted Boonhnakit, and Lamar Waldron, creators of Comics Interview's "Micra." Other events will include a D&D® game tournament beginning at 11 A.M., an auction for a charitable organization at 4:30 P.M., a schedule of movies, and hosts of dealers and collectors. Admission is \$1 for the entire day. Table rentals are \$30 for one 8' table. Write to: Amazing World of Fantasy, 1922 Shorter Avenue, Rome GA 30161; Bojo's Records and Tapes, Wal-Mart Shopping Center, Cedartown GA 30125; or call Patrick at: (404) 234-5309 after 6 P.M.

CONGREGATE 88, June 10-12

This science-fiction, fantasy, and gaming convention will be held at the Moat House Hotel in Longthorpe, Peterborough, U.K. Terry Pratchett is the guest of honor. Supporting membership fees are £5 and attending membership fees are £11. Write to: A.D. Smith, P.R. Officer, CONGREGATE 88, 25 Cavendish Street, Peterborough, PE1 5EQ, UNITED KINGDOM.

GLATHRICON '88, June 10-12

This gaming extravaganza will be held at the Executive Inn in Evansville, Ind. Very special guest of honor is TSR's own Jeff Grubb; special guest of honor is E. Gary Gygax; and DM guest of honor is TSR's Harold Johnson. Other guests include Jean Rabe, Frank Mentzer, Penny Petti-

cord, and Gary M. Williams. Events include RPGA™ Network AD&D® game feature, Masters, and Grand Masters tournaments, along with the first MARVEL SUPER HEROES® game Grand Masters tournament, a JAMES BOND® game, a GAMMA WORLD® game event, the Joe Martin AD&D® game benefit tournament, a masquerade, art show, auction, RPGA™ Network meeting, scavenger hunt, and the Rembert Roast. The cost is \$16. Players may preregister for games for \$2. Write to: Evansville Gaming Guild, P.O. Box 15414, Evansville IN 47716.

HOSTIGOS, June 10-12

This science-fiction convention, which is sponsored by the Penn State Science Fiction Society, will be held in the Hetzel Union Building on the University Park campus of Pennsylvania State University in State College, Pa. Hotel accommodations are available at the Sheraton Penn State located at 240 S. Pugh Street in State College, Pa. Jerry Pournelle will be the author guest of honor and John Carr will be the editor guest of honor. This convention will be held in honor of Pennsylvania's most famous SF writer, H. Beam Piper. There will be numerous panels concerning Piper's life and works, as well as several gaming events, an art show, a dealers' room, and more. Registration is \$22. Write to: HOSTIGOS, 400 S. Gill Street, State College PA 16801; or call: (814) 237-5333.

MICHICON GAMEFEST '88, June 10-12

This gaming convention will be held at the Southfield Civic Center in Southfield, Mich. Events include 60 board games, 25 role-playing games, and 60 miniatures events, as well as a BATTLE FOR MOSCOW® tournament, 35 dealers' booths, three used-games auctions, and open gaming. Advance admission is \$12 for all three days, or \$7 for one day. Write to: Mike Bartnikowski, Metro Detroit Gamers, Box 656, Wyandotte MI 48192; or call: Barry Jensen at (313) 591-2300, ext. 325 (days) or Mike Bartnikowski at (313) 928-7744 (evenings).

ROSECON '88, June 10-12

This science-fiction and gaming convention will be held at the Holiday Inn Portland Airport in Portland, Ore. Special guests will include Larry Niven (author of *Ringworld*), George Takei (Mr. Sulu of *Star Trek*), D.C. Fontana (*Star Trek* writer and producer), Rick Sternbach (illustrator for *Star Trek: The Next Generation*), and Richard Arnold (*Star Trek* archivist at Paramount). Special events include an afternoon masquerade, two live-music dances, a western buffet banquet, an art show, all-night casino games, movie previews, open gaming, panel discussions, a dealers' room, and free transportation to Portland's Rose Festival. Membership rates are \$30 until June 1, and \$35 at the door. Hotel rates are \$62 a night, and are arranged by calling (800) HOLIDAY or (503) 256-5000. Write to: ROSECON '88, P.O. Box 69373, Portland OR 97201; or call: (503) 777-2377.

X-CON 12, June 10-12

This science-fiction and fantasy convention will be held at the Red Carpet Inn, 4747 S. Howell Avenue in Milwaukee, Wis. Special guests include: Somtow Sucharitkul as author guest, Bruce Pelz as fan guest, Dell Harris as artist guest, and Wilson "Bob" Tucker as first fandom guest. Scheduled events include an art show, ice-cream social, hucksters' room, masquerade party, and blood drive. Registration is \$15 until May 10, or \$20 at the door. Terry Carr Memorial Memberships are also available at \$18 (this includes a \$2 donation to the American Diabetes Association and a listing of your name

in the program book). Write to: X-CON, Ltd., PO. Box 7, Milwaukee WI 53201.

DAGA, June 12

This science-fiction and fantasy convention will be held from 10 A.M. to 5 P.M. at the Fiesta Motor Inn Ballroom, less than one mile south of exit 27 on the Pennsylvania Turnpike, in Willow Grove, Penn. Scheduled events include model-building, look-alike, sound-alike, costume, and trivia contests, with discussions on role-playing games, figure painting, and more. Dealers will display their wares, and various science-fiction and fantasy models and dioramas will be on exhibit. Dealers' tables are \$40 and registration is \$8 at the door. Send an SASE to: DAGA Conventions, Daniel A. Aunspach, 105 Alison Lane D-15, Horsham PA 19044.

BOREAL 10, June 16-19

*

The 10th-annual Francophone science-fiction and fantasy convention will be held in Chicoutimi, Quebec, Canada. Guests include William Gibson, Judith Merrill, Gerard Klein, Daniel Semine, Wojtech Siudmak, and many others. Feature events include a two-day seminar on Francophone science fiction and fantasy, workshops, computer demonstrations, three different art shows, and four showings of *Le theatre sans fil's* production of *The Lord of the Rings*, done with giant puppets and laser effects. Usual activities include: panels, movies, a masquerade, a few cocktail parties, the Boreal Awards ceremony, a brunch, a dealers' room, and much more. For gamers, a role-playing tournament and game demonstrations are included. Low-priced accommodations are available. Registration fees are \$50 for the two days of seminars, \$35 for the convention, and \$70 for both. Write to: BOREAL, 10,266 Belleau Street, Chicoutimi, Quebec, CANADA G7H-2Y8.

THE INTERNATIONAL SUPERMAN * EXPOSITION, NEOVENTION VII, and 1988 STARFLEET* NATIONAL CONFERENCE June 16-19

Ohio's largest gaming convention proudly sponsors a once-in-a-lifetime event: The International Superman* Exposition at the Cleveland Convention Center. This once-only exposition will take place at the annual NEOVENTION normally held at Kent State University. This major summer happening will also include the STARFLEET* National Conference. Special attractions include: an RPGA™ Network AD&D® game Open Masters tournament; BOOT HILL®, MARVEL SUPER HEROES®, CHAMPIONS®, and CAR WARS* tournaments; over 100 AD&D® game and other role-playing game events; over 50 miniatures competitions, including Ancients, Napoleonic, and Civil War events; a games auction; a figure-painting contest; a masquerade ball; a city-wide parade; television and movie presentations; major *Star Trek* and other science-fiction movie displays and floats; and much more. Dozens of science-fiction and fantasy authors and a score of television and movie personalities will be in attendance. In addition, design workshops, panel discussions, and several other events will be featured. Limited preregistration pass prices are \$6 per day and \$15 for the weekend. Write to: NEOVENTION VII, c/o Neverending Battle, Inc., Suite 852, Hanna Building, Cleveland OH 44115.

POLYCON VI, June 17-19

This science-fiction and fantasy gaming convention will be held at the Santa Lucia Dormitory on the California Polytechnic State University in San Luis Obispo, Calif. Featured events will

include fantasy role-playing and war gaming, a games auction, seminars, a miniatures-painting contest, game demonstrations, and a dealers' room. Registration rates for the weekend are \$24 at the door. One-day fees are \$12 at the door. Write to: POLYCON VI, Box 168, Julien A. McPhee University Union, California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo CA 93407.

SL RALLY '88, June 25

For the third year in a row, On All Fronts holds its annual SL RALLY with tournaments in SQUAD LEADER* and ADVANCED SQUAD LEADER* games. Held at the Holiday Inn in Conway, Ark., this year's convention will feature \$100 cash prizes to be awarded in the ASL tournament. Other prizes will include terrific discounts on wargames at the Game Booth. Preregistration fees are \$15. Write to: On All Fronts, PO. Box 265, Marshall AZ 72650.

SCIENCE FICTION ART EXHIBITION June, 27-August 22

The Orlando Science Center in Orlando, Fla., will feature a collection of art and artifacts from Michael Whelan, Vincent Di Fate, Kelly Freas, and other artists. The show will also have motion-picture artifacts, a film lecture series, and a film festival. Admission is \$4 for adults, \$3 for children, and \$10 for entire families. The Orlando Science Center is located in Orlando Loch Haven Park, just off Interstate 4 in downtown Orlando. Write to: Orlando Science Center, 810 East Rollins Street, Orlando FL 32803-1291; or call: (407) 896-7151.

DALLAS FANTASY FAIR, July 1-3

Bulldog Productions presents its largest show of the year. This comic-book, science-fiction, and film convention will be held at the Sheraton Park Central, 12720 Merit Drive, LBJ at Coit, in Dallas, Texas. This event will feature more than 200 dealers' tables, 100 guests of honor, an art show and auction, a masquerade, 24-hour gaming sessions, 24-hour Japanimation and video rooms, artists and writers workshops, readings, a dance, an open convention suite, and much more. The anticipated attendance for this convention is 3,000. Tables are available, but write for prices. Admission fees are \$20 for all three days paid in advance, or \$25 at the door. Write to: Bulldog Productions, P.O. Box 820488, Dallas TX 75382; or call: (214) 349-3367.

NANCON-88 X, July 1-3

The 10th anniversary of this gaming convention will be held at the Ramada Inn N.W. Crossing in Houston, Tex. There will be a large dealers' room and an open gaming room available to registrants. Events include AD&D®, BATTLETECH®, SQUAD LEADER®, STAR FLEET BATTLES®, TRAVELLER®, and TWILIGHT! 2000* tournaments, naval and 15mm Napoleonic miniatures competitions, and CIVILIZATION®, PARANOIA®, NUCLEAR WAR®, CALL OF CTHULHU®, CAR WARS®, FEDERATION AND EMPIRE®, and team head-to-head AD&D® games. Other events include a miniatures-painting contest, a costume contest, and more. Send an SASE to: Nan's Game HQ, 2011 S.W. Freeway, Houston TX 77098, ATTN: NANCON.

CAPITOLCON IV, July 9

This gaming convention will be held at the Prairie Capital Convention Center in Springfield, Ill. Board, miniatures, and role-playing gaming will be featured at this one-day event. Write to: Bill Wilson, 3320 Gaines Mill Road, Apt. 4, Springfield IL 62704; or call: (217) 787-7092.

COLONIAL CITY GAMEFEST VI July 9-10

GAMEFEST will again be held in the Memorial Building in Mt. Vernon, Ohio. Role-playing and wargaming events will be sponsored. Admission is \$2 per day or \$3.50 for both days. Write to: Mt. Vernon Gamers Association, 205 W. Gambier Street, Mt. Vernon OH 43050.

EMPEROR'S BIRTHDAY CONVENTION July 9

This gaming convention will be held at the Brookdale Country Club in Elkhart, Ind. Featured events include RPGA™ Network tournaments (including AD&D® game and MARVEL SUPER HEROES® game events), BATTLETECH* games, and miniatures competitions. Write to: Bob Hagerty, 227 North 2nd Street, Apt. G, Elkhart IN 46516.

DOVERCON IV, July 16-17

This year's DOVERCON will be held at the University of New Hampshire's Memorial Union Building (MUB) in Durham, N.H. Features include an RPGA™ Network AD&D® game Open Tournament, along with many other events. A film festival, miniatures contest, and art competition will also be held. Registration is \$15 for both days and must be received no later than July 1 (this includes entry into three events). Registration at the door is \$15 for both days and \$10 for one (no free entry to events provided). Each event costs \$2. Vendor and game master enquiries are welcome. Write to: Information, DOVERCON IV PO. Box 753, Dover NH 03820.

WINDSOR GAMEFEST VI, July 16-17

*

This gaming convention takes place at the Ambassador Auditorium in the University Centre at the University of Windsor in Windsor, Ontario, Canada. Special guest of honor is science-fiction and fantasy artist Gideon. Featured events include role-playing, miniatures, and board games, a dealers' room, free movies, an art exhibit, and several door prizes. Preregistration fees are \$10 Canadian for the weekend and \$7 Canadian per day. Write to: Windsor Gaming Society, PO. Box 2055, Walkerville Station, Windsor, Ontario, CANADA, N8Y 4R5.

HAYSCON IV, July 22-23

This two-day gaming convention will be held at the Memorial Union of Fort Hays State University in Hays, Kans. Numerous strategic, tactical, and role-playing games will be featured, along with seminars, an auction, and a miniatures contest. Expected events will include CALL OF CTHULHU*, BATTLETECH*, CAR WARS*, and TWILIGHT! 2000* games, and an AD&D® game Open Tournament. Preregistration is \$10 for both action-packed days, or \$12 at the door. Write to: HAYSCON IV, 1301 Felten Drive, Hays KS 67601.

MEMPHIS FANTASY CONVENTION July 22-24

Sponsored by the Memphis Fantasy Convention Association, Inc., this fifth-annual event will be held at the Garden Plaza Hotel in Memphis, Tenn. Scheduled guests include John Ostrander, Tom Yeates, Gary Spiegel, and Allen Hammack. Activities will include extensive gaming, an art show and sale, dealer exhibitions, panel discussions, a costume contest, and a banquet. Daily admission is \$10; the entire weekend costs \$21. Send an SASE to: MEMPHIS FANTASY CONVENTION, Box 11081, Memphis TN 38111.

KINGCON IV, July 30

KINGCON IV will be held at the Best Western

Inn in Mt. Vernon, Ill. Sponsored by the Knights of the Griffon, this gaming convention will feature a two-round RPGA™ Network AD&D® game tournament, a three-round ILLUMINATI* tournament, a miniatures contest, and lots of gaming. Preregistration is \$3 until July 20 and \$5 thereafter. Send an SASE to: KINGCON IV, 501 S. 19th Street #3, Mt. Vernon IL 62864; or call: (618) 242-7920.

PROJECT...GENESIS III, July 31

The people from PATCO bring yet another fantasy gaming convention, this time to Chiminello's Hall, 2221 N. Webber in Fresno, Calif. This one-day event will run from 9 A.M. to 11 P.M. Featured events include BATTLETECH*, AD&D®, STAR FLEET BATTLES*, CHAMPIONS*, and other game events. Both tournament and open games will be available to all, along with dealers' tables and a swap meet for those wishing to buy, sell, or trade old games and books (table space is required). Preregistration for this event is \$3 for the day if paid before July 20, and \$5 afterward. Swap meet tables are \$5 for the whole table and \$3.50 for half. Dealers should call or write for details. Judges are needed for events; those accepted receive a refund on their registration fees. Write to: PATCO, c/o Phillip S. Pittz, 5415 E. Washington, Fresno CA 93727; or call: (209) 255-4682.

OMACON 8, August 5-7

This major Midwest science-fiction, pro-space, and gaming convention is sponsored by Nebraskans for the Advancement of Space Development (NASD), and will be held at the Holiday Inn Central, 3321 S. 72nd Street, in Omaha, Nebr. Write to: OMACON 8, P.O. Box 37851, Omaha NE 68137; or call: (402) 476-7176.

EASTERN N.C. TOY AND HOBBY SHOW August 6-7

This show will be held at the New Cumberland County Agro-Expo Center, just off Highway 301 South, in Fayetteville, N.C. This event includes a swap meet for collectors of comic books and antique and collectible toys, games, model kits, and baseball cards. Daily admission fees are \$3. Write to: Carolina Hobby Expo, 3452 Odell School Road, Concord NC 28025; or call: (704) 786-8373.

GOLDQUEST 88, August 12-14

This fantasy and science-fiction convention, sponsored by the Goldquest Clubs of Manasota, will be held in Sarasota, Fla., at the Sarasota-Bradenton Airport Holiday Inn on U.S. 41. Board, role-playing, and miniatures games (with awards in several categories) are featured, with miniatures-painting and costume contests, a KILLER* tournament, and more. A dealers' room and 24-hour video room will be available, and a pool party will be held at 7 P.M. on Friday, August 12, to open the convention. Admission is \$8 if paid prior to July 1, and \$10 thereafter. Write to: Goldquest Clubs, P.O. Box 1017, Oneco FL 34264-1017; or call and leave your name and address at: (813) 758-0421.

UNICON 1988, August 18-21

This science-fiction and fantasy convention will be held at King Alfred's Teacher 'Raining College in Winchester, Hants., Great Britain. Confirmed guests as of this point include Patrick Tilley (author of *Mission*, *Fade Out*, and *The Amtrak Wars*) and Michael de Larrabeiti (author of *The Horribles*). Admission fees are £10 for attending memberships. Single room rates are £10. Checks or postal orders should be made

payable to WINCON. Payments may be made in U.S. dollars; registrants should learn the current exchange rates before sending any money. Write to: WINCON, 11 Rutland Street, Hanley, Stoke on Trent, Staffs., UNITED KINGDOM; or call: (0782) 271070.

DRAK CON '88, August 20-21

This year's event will be held in the College Dining Room at the Northern College of Education on Hilton Drive in Aberdeen, Scotland. DRAK CON will run from 9 A.M. to 11:30 P.M. on Saturday and from 9 A.M. to 8:30 P.M. on Sunday. Now in its third year, DRAK CON has the additional aim of raising money for famine relief. Events for this convention will include an AD&D® game tournament. Admission costs for this convention are £5 for adults and £3.50 for children under 16 for both days. There will be a £1 reduction for registration bookings for one-day registrations made before July 9th (or £3 for adults and £2 for children under 16). Bed and breakfast accommodations may be booked in advance at £8.50 per night. Send an SASE to: DRAK CON '88, c/o S. Douglas, 13 Springbank Terrace, Aberdeen, UNITED KINGDOM, AB1 2LS; or call: (0224) 572128. Make all checks payable to "Dragon Aid." All proceeds for this convention go for famine relief.

HOUSTON FANFAIR, August 20-21

Bulldog Productions presents this small, fun comic-book, science-fiction, and film convention. This event will be held at a hotel to be announced. More than 60 dealers' tables, more than a dozen guests of honor, a masquerade, 24-hour gaming sessions, 24-hour video rooms, writers workshops, an open convention suite, and a huge Saturday night party will be featured events. The anticipated attendance for this convention is 600. Tables are available for \$50/\$60. Admission fees are \$4 for Saturday, \$3 for Sunday, and \$5 for both days at the door only. Write to: Bulldog Productions, P.O. Box 820488, Dallas TX 75382; or call: (214) 349-3367.

FESTICON 88, August 27-28

This gaming convention will be held at the Hotel Syracuse in Syracuse, N.Y. Special events will include AD&D® game tournaments along with STAR FLEET BATTLES*, TRAVELLER*, and other game features, an art show and costume party. Guests of honor will be announced at a later date. Registration fees are \$10 (which includes the first tournament fee and \$5 for every tournament after the first. Registrations made before July 15 will receive a half-price discount on tournament fees. Write to: FESTICON 88, c/o Walden III, 547 Allen Street, Syracuse NY 13210.

GATEWAY '88, September 2-5

This gaming convention will be held at the Los Angeles Airport Hyatt Hotel. Role-playing, wargame, computer game, and family board game tournaments are offered, as well as various seminars and demonstrations, a flea market, a game auction, and an exhibitors' area. Write to: STRATEGICON, 5374 Village Road, Long Beach CA 90808; or call: (213) 420-3675.

AUSTIN FANFAIR, September 17-18

Bulldog Productions presents this small, fun comic-book, science-fiction, and film convention. This event will be held at a hotel to be announced. More than 60 dealers' tables, more than a dozen guests of honor, a masquerade, 24-hour gaming sessions, 24-hour video rooms, writers workshops, an open convention suite, and a huge Saturday night party will be fea-

tured events. The anticipated attendance for this convention is 600. Tables are available for \$50/\$60. Admission fees are \$4 for Saturday, \$3 for Sunday, and \$5 for both days at the door only. Write to: Bulldog Productions, P.O. Box 820488, Dallas TX 75382; or call: (214) 349-3367.

SUNCOAST SKIRMISHES '88 September 30-October 2

SKIRMISHES presents the eighth-annual production of this popular gaming extravaganza. This event will take place at the Holiday Inn-Ashley Plaza, 111 West Fortune Street in Tampa, Fla. Room rates are \$50 for single or double occupancy. Events include AD&D®, TRAVELLER*, STAR FLEET BATTLES*, and CAR WARS* game events, along with Napoleonic, Seakrieg, and board gaming events, a KILLER* tournament, a dealers' room, SCA demonstrations, and many other role-playing and historical events. Hotel reservations may be made by calling: (813) 223-1351. Registration fees are \$18 for the weekend. Send your registration fees to receive the program booklet. Write to: SKIRMISHES, P.O. Box 2097, Winter Haven FL 33883; or call: (813) 299-6784 or (813) 293-7938.

JUST-A-CON, October 1-2

This broad-scope gaming convention will feature AD&D® and STAR FLEET BATTLES* tournaments, a miniatures demonstration series (hosted by Larry Bloom), lectures, entertainment, a host of role-playing and war games, a dealers' room, and much more. Sponsored by the Commuter Information and Assistance department of the University of North Carolina-Charlotte, this event will be held at the Cone Center on the UNCC campus. Send an SASE to: JUST-A-CON I, 9232-35 University City Boulevard, Charlotte NC 28213.

COUNCIL OF FIVE NATIONS 14 October 7-9

This role-playing, board-gaming, and miniatures convention will be held at the Center City Convention Center in Schenectady, N.Y. The convention will have at least two AD&D® game tournaments sponsored by the RPGA™ Network), as well as a number of other AD&D® game events. There will also be TOP SECRET®, RUNEQUEST*, BATTLETECH*, STAR FLEET BATTLES*, DIPLOMACY*, and many other game events. In addition, this convention will feature an auction, a miniatures-painting contest, and costume contest. Gaming areas will be open 24 hours a day, and will include some all-night events. Registration is \$10 for the weekend, if paid before September 22. At-the-door registration is \$15 for the weekend, or \$4 for Friday and \$7 each for Saturday and Sunday. Event fees range from free to \$3 for each. Write to: COUNCIL OF FIVE NATIONS, c/o The Studio of Bridge & Games, 1639 Eastern Parkway, Schenectady NY 12309.

CHICAGO MODEL & HOBBY SHOW October 13-16

Sponsored by the Radio Control Hobby Trade Association, this fourth-annual event will be held at the O'Hare Expo Center in Rosemont, Ill. The convention has expanded by over 10,000 square feet this year in order to accommodate exhibitor demand. Over 2,000 retailers and distributors attended last year's show. Write to: CHICAGO MODEL & HOBBY SHOW, 2400 East Devon Avenue, Suite 205, Des Plaines IL 60019-9353; or call: (800) 323-5155 (in Illinois, call: (312) 299-3131).



Assume the role of your favorite super-spy from movies, television or books. Equip yourself with everything from a Baretta to a bazooka. A Lear to a Lamborghini. And step into the ring. The spy ring.

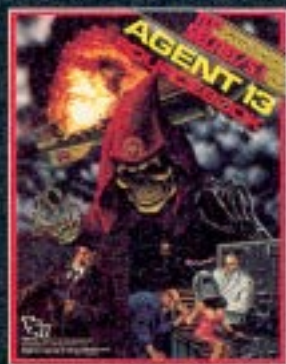
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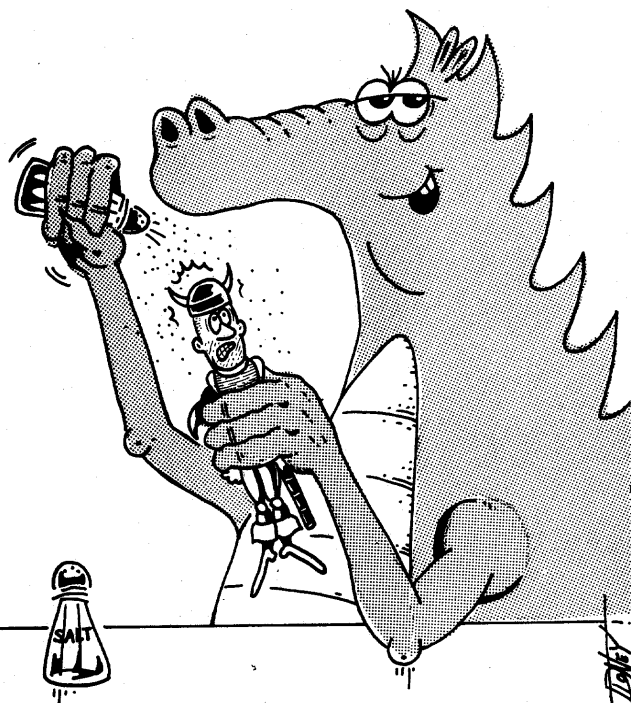
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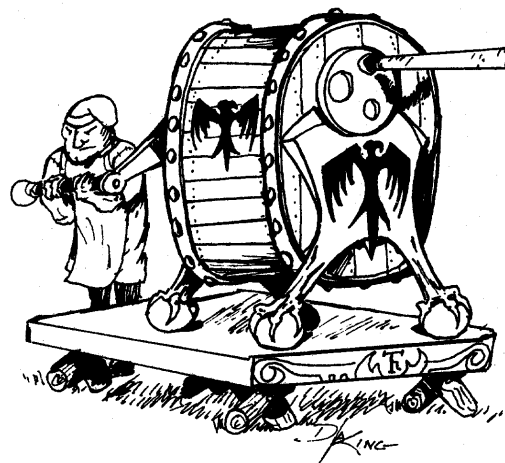


by Mark Doney

"YOU CALL THAT A KISS?!"



by Walt Hackensmith, Jr.

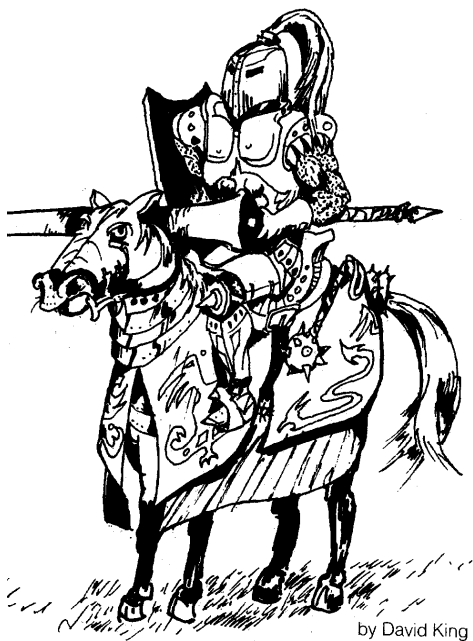


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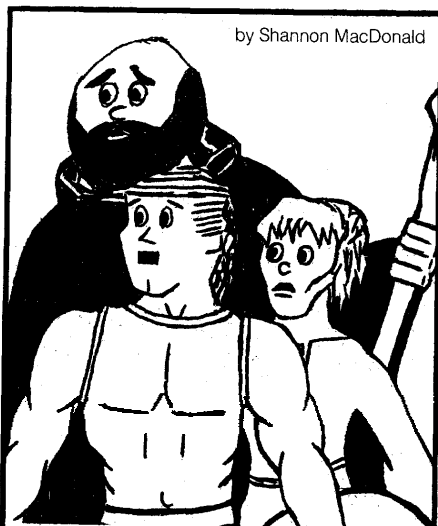
MEYER
10



"THE BARBARIAN LUNCH LOOKS GOOD!"



by David King



by Shannon MacDonald

"OH NO! IT'S THAT
'UNFINISHED PART OF
THE DUNGEON' WE FEEL
STRANGELY COMPELLED
TO AVOID."



by Bob Muleady

Muleady.

"HAVE YOU BEEN SLEEP-PILLAGING AGAIN?!"

by Richard Tomasic



"... AND REMEMBER WULF,
KEEP A SHARP EYE
OUT FOR
FLYING
DRAGONS ..."

TOMASIC

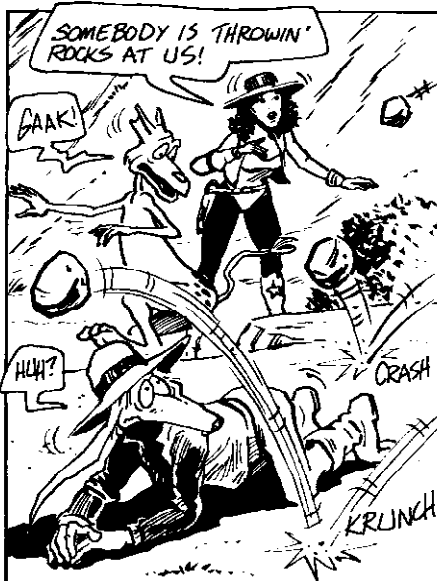
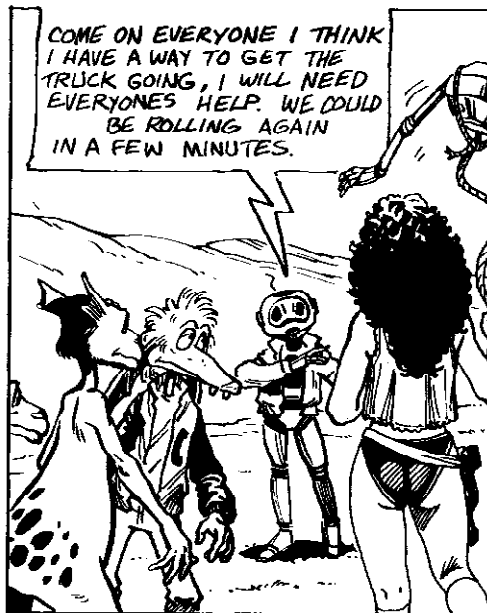


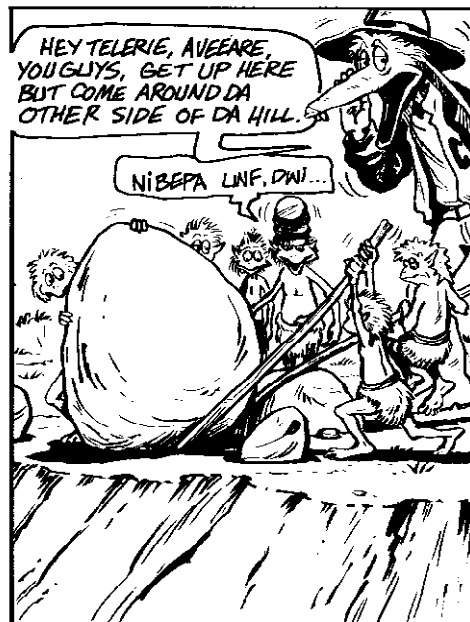
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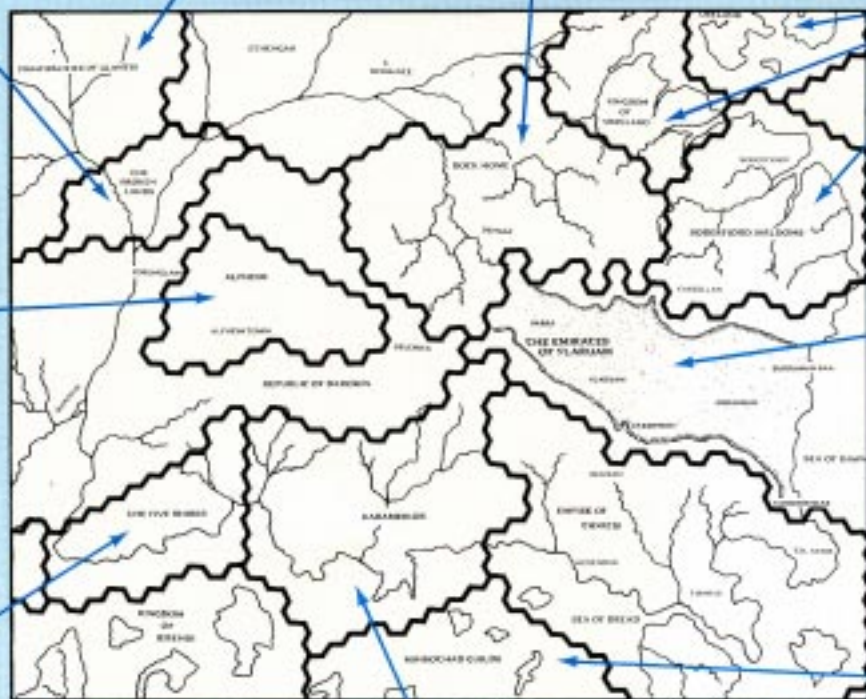


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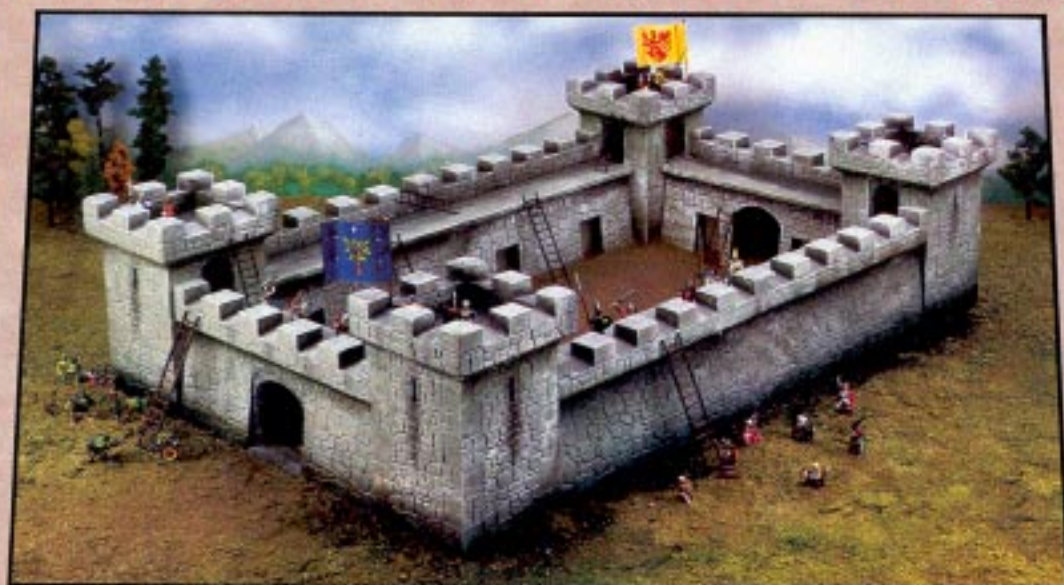
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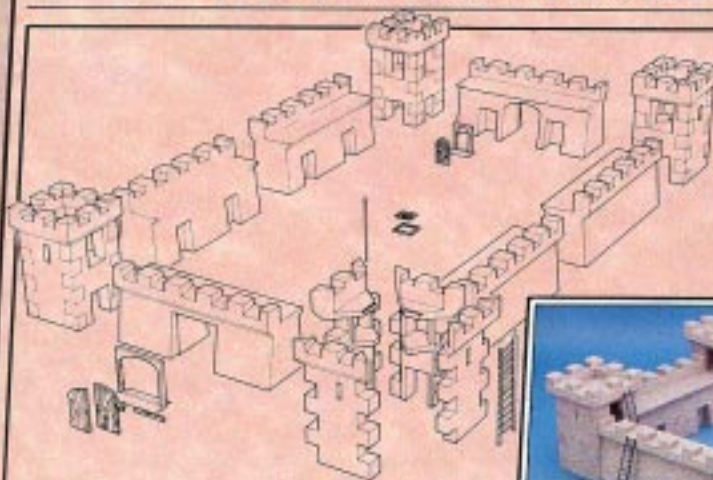
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MIGHTY FORTRESS

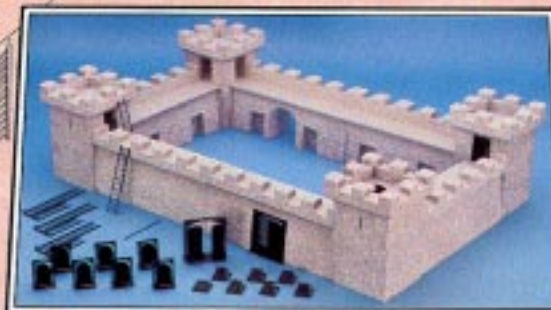


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Mind you - we could always surrender."

Baron von Hahnhertz, The Fall of Castle Grossburg

To the 41st Millennium...

The Space Marine heard a noise where no noise should be. Instinctively he rolled forward and started firing. The first Ork died, then the second, then the third, but despite a hail of bolts the ferocious creatures continued to advance. All around the fort Orks were clambering over the parapets, surrounding the Marine. Undaunted the Imperial warrior prepared to die, and as he charged he uttered the Death Chant of his Chapter, "By my death shall I live."



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A detailed illustration of a science fiction scene. In the foreground, a soldier in a blue uniform and goggles looks off to the side, holding a futuristic rifle. Behind him, several other soldiers in similar uniforms are standing in a field of tall grass, looking towards a distant horizon. The background features a large, full moon in a dark, starry sky, with two bright, parallel light beams descending from the top of the frame. The overall tone is dramatic and futuristic.

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